To
The Reverend
Thomas Birch D.D.
from
Dav: Dalrymple &c.

1019. d. 24.

II- E. a.

# SELECT DISCOURSES:

TREATING

I. Of the True Method of attaining Divine Knowledge.
II. Of Superſtition.
III. Of Atheiſm.
IV. Of the Immortality of the Soul.
V. Of the Exiſtence and Nature of God.
VI. Of Legal Righteouſneſs, and the Righteouſneſs of Faith.
VII. Of the Shortneſs and Vanity of a Phariſaical Righteouſneſs.
VIII. Of the Excellency and Nobleneſs of True Religion.
IX. Of the Conflicts and Conqueſts of a Chriſtian.

By JOHN SMITH,

Late Fellow of QUEEN'S College in CAMBRIDGE.

HEBREWS xi. 4.

——ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖται.

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M,DCC,LVI.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

30d

# PREFACE.

*JOHN SMITH*, the Author of the following Diſcourſes, was born in the year 1618, at *Achurch* near *Oundle* in *Northamptonſhire*, where his Father poſſeſſed a ſmall farm (*a*).

On the 5th of *April* 1636, he was admitted a ſcholar of *Emanuel College* in *Cambridge* (*b*). It was his peculiar felicity to have for Tutor Dr. *Whichcote* (*c*): By that excellent perſon he was directed in his ſtudies, and bounteouſly maintained (*d*).

In the year 1640, he took the degree of Bachelor of arts, and in the year 1644, the degree of Maſter of arts.

He never obtained a fellowſhip in *Emanuel College*; for which the following reaſon may be aſſigned; by the ſtatutes of that College, no more than one fellow can be admitted from any one county; and *William Dillingham* (*e*), a native of *Northamptonſhire* had been admitted a fellow in the year 1642, at which time Mr. *Smith* was not, by his ſtanding in the Univerſity, capable of a fellowſhip (*f*).

He was, however, on the 11th of *June* 1644, appointed fellow of *Queen's College* in *Cambridge*, in the room of one of the fellows whom the Earl of



(*a*) A Sermon preached at the funeral of Mr. *John Smith* by *Simon Patrick* D. D. at that time Fellow of *Queen's* College in *Cambridge*, and afterwards Biſhop of *Ely*. Biſhop *Kennet*, regiſter and chronicle *p.* 127.

(*b*) *Patrick*. funeral ſermon.

(*c*) At that time Fellow of *Emanuel* College, and afterwards Provoſt of *King's* College.

(*d*) Preface to *Smith's Select Diſcourſes* by *John Worthington* D. D. *p.* 6.

(*e*) Afterwards Doctor of Divinity and Maſter of that College.

(*f*) From the information of the accurate and ingenious Dr. *Birch*, Secretary to the Royal Society.

*Manchester* ejected at that time by virtue of the Parliamentary ordinance (*g*).

In this College he became eminently useful as a Fellow and a Tutor; after a tedious sickness, supported with exemplary patience, he died on the 7th of *August* 1652, and was buried in the Chapel of *Queen's* College (*h*).

To that College he bequeathed a valuable collection of books; on which account he is recorded among its Benefactors, and his name and the donation made by him are publicly recited at the end of every term (*i*).

He was a person of lively apprehension, solid judgment and unwearied diligence; by these qualifications he acquired, at an early age, a knowledge in the sciences uncommonly extensive.

He was read in Law and Physic, well versed in History, Philosophy and Mathematics, and critically skilled in the learned languages. His abilities as a Moralist and a Divine, may be discerned from his *Select Discourses*. He may seem to have over-rated the writings of the later *Platonists*, and to have paid too great regard to their authority: but he had this fault in common with many of his co-temporarys. The study of *Plotinus* and of the other authors of his sect was then much cultivated at *Cambridge*.

They who know him, represent him to have been of a character most amiable. He was a conscientious and disinterested man: his notions of virtue were exalted, his benevolence universal: Christian kindness was the ruling principle of his heart, and the constant and delightful subject of his conversation: the zeal of the times in which he lived was unhappily

(*g*) In the place of one *Appleby*, as *Walker* conjectures, list of loyal and Episcopal Clergy, *p.* 157.

(*h*) *Patrick.* funeral sermon.

(*i*) From the information of Dr. *Birch.*

unhappily violent, his own temper was paſſionate; yet he was ever faithful to the great *law of love*. The perverſe and obſtinate wickedneſs of mankind excited in him emotions of ſorrow, not of anger.

He was communicative of his knowledge to others, and on their account chearfully permitted the interruption of his own ſtudies.

He performed the duties belonging to his office of Tutor with faithful application: he taught equally by precept and example: He had an eaſe of expreſſion rarely to be found in ſtudious and abſtracted perſons: He laboured to accompliſh his pupils in all human literature; yet he employed his moſt anxious care in leading them in the ways of heavenly wiſdom; for he was, as Dr. *Patrick* expreſſes it, *a holy and faithful guardian*.

Yet did not his learning and ſuperior uſefulneſs ſwell him with arrogance: his humility was the moſt conſpicuous of all his virtues. He himſelf was wont to ſay, *That learning when put in oppoſition to moral accompliſhments, was nothing more than an excellent kind of vanity*.

As a preacher, he was careful of adapting his diſcourſes to the capacity of his audience: He was zealous for the ſalvation of ſouls; to this great end he purpoſed to have dedicated his future labours: but God was pleaſed to call him early to the reward of obedience.

He was conſtant in meditation, and ſerious in prayer: his faith in the great truths of religion was ſincere and productive of good works: in a word, he was a plain-hearted, intelligent, and practical Chriſtian.

He compoſed not only the *Seleƈt Diſcourſes*, but alſo ſeveral treatiſes, as well in *Latin* as in *Engliſh*. Some part of them appear to have been once in the hands of Dr. *Worthington* (*k*). His *Mathematical lectures*

(*k*) Preface *p.* 30.

*lectures* are mentioned with particular commendation; the contents of the other treatiſes are not known.

His *Select Diſcourſes* were by his executor Dr. *Samuel Cradock*, committed to the care of Dr. *Worthington* (*l*), who, with much induſtry and labour, prepared them for the preſs. They were publiſhed at *London* in the year 1660; and again in the year 1673. The diſcourſe *of prophecy* was tranſlated into *Latin* by M. *Le Clerc*, and prefixed to his commentaries on the Prophets, printed at *Amſterdam* in the year 1731. The diſcourſe *of the excellency and nobleneſs of true religion* was alſo ſeparately publiſhed at *Glaſgow* in the year 1745.

It may now be proper to ſay a few words of this edition of the *Select Diſcourſes*. It is printed from that which was publiſhed by Dr. *Worthington* in the year 1660; but with ſeveral alterations.

The ſixth Diſcourſe, which treats of prophecy, abounds in good learning; but it does not properly relate to Chriſtian practice: It is therefore omitted. The eight chapter of the fourth Diſcourſe, which treats of the opinion of *Ariſtotle* in relation to the immortality of the ſoul, is for the ſame reaſon omitted.

Many quotations from authors in the learned languages have been tranſlated, and all the original paſſages placed in the notes. Among the notes are alſo placed certain alluſions to antient Mythology, and to the erroneous notions in Philoſophy which prevailed in the days of the Author. Various inaccuracies of ſtyle have been corrected, and harſh expreſſions ſoftened: The ſenſe nevertheleſs of the original has been carefully preſerved.

A labour ſo tedious and unpleaſing, may, it is hoped, prove of ſome utility to the reader; to his candour is this edition ſubmitted.

(*l*) Preface *p.* 1.

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*Drawn up by* JOHN WORTHINGTON, D.D.

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*Chap.* V. The fourth and laſt miſtake about religion, *When a mere mechanical and artificial religion is taken for that which is a true impreſſion of heaven upon the ſouls of men, and which moves like a new nature.* How religion is by ſome made a piece of art, and how there may be ſpecious and plauſible imitations of the internals of religion as well as of the externals. The method and power of fancy in contriving ſuch artificial imitations. How apt men are in theſe to deceive both themſelves and others. The difference between thoſe that are governed in their religion by fancy, and thoſe that are actuated by the divine Spirit, and in whom religion is a living form. That true religion is no art, but a new nature. Religion diſcovers itſelf beſt in a ſerene and clear

clear temper of mind, in deep humility, meekneſs, ſelf-denial, univerſal love of God and all true goodneſs, page 202.

## DISCOURSE VIII.

## Of the Excellency and Nobleneſs of true Religion.

*CHAP.* I. 1. *The nobleneſs of religion in regard of its original and fountain:* It comes from heaven and moves towards heaven again. God the firſt excellency and primitive perfection. All perfections and excellencies in any kind are to be meaſured by their approach to, and participation of the firſt perfection. Religion the greateſt participation of God: none capable of this divine communication but the higheſt of created beings: and conſequently religion is the greateſt excellency. A twofold fountain in God whence religion flows, *viz.* 1. His nature. 2. His will. Of truth natural and revealed, Of an outward and inward revelation of God's will, p. 213.

*Chap.* II. 2. *The nobleneſs of religion in reſpect of its nature,* briefly diſcovered in ſome particulars. How a man actuated by religion, 1. lives above the world; 2. converſes with himſelf, and knows how to love, value and reverence himſelf, in the beſt ſenſe; 3. lives above himſelf, not being content to enjoy himſelf, except he may enjoy God too, and himſelf in God. How he denies himſelf for God. To deny a man's ſelf, is not to deny right reaſon, for that were to deny God, inſtead of denying himſelf for God. Self-love the only principle that acts wicked men. The happy privileges of a ſoul united to God, p. 217.

*Chap.* III. 3. *The Nobleneſs of religion in regard of its properties, &c.* of which this is one, 1. *Religion enlarges all the faculties of the ſoul, and begets a true ingenuity, liberty and amplitude, the moſt free and generous ſpirit in the minds of good men.* The nearer any being comes to

God, the more large and free; the further it ſlides from God, the more ſtraitned. Sin is the ſinking of man's ſoul from God into ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs. An account when the moſt generous freedom of the ſoul is to be taken in its juſt proportions. How mechanical and formal chriſtians make an art of religion; ſet it ſuch bounds as may not exceed the ſcant meaſure of their principles; and then fit their own notions as ſo many examples to it. A good man finds not his religion without him, but as a living principle within him. God's immutable and eternal goodneſs the unchangeable rule of his will. Peeviſh, ſelf-willed and imperious men ſhape out ſuch notions of God as are agreeable to this pattern of themſelves. The truly religious have better apprehenſions of God, page 224.

*Chap.* IV. The ſecond property diſcovering the nobleneſs of religion, *viz. That it reſtores a man to a juſt power and dominion over himſelf, enables him to overcome his ſelf-will and paſſions.* Of ſelf-will, and the many evils that flow from it. That religion does no where diſcover its power and proweſs ſo much, as in ſubduing this dangerous and potent enemy. The higheſt and nobleſt victories are thoſe over our ſelf-will and paſſions. Of ſelf-denial, and the having power over our wills; the happineſs and the privileges of ſuch a ſtate. How that magnanimity and puiſſance which religion begets in holy ſouls differs from and excells that gallantry and puiſſance which the great *Nimrods* of this world boaſt of, p. 248.

*Chap.* V. The third property or effect diſcovering the nobleneſs of religion, *viz. That it directs and enables a man to propound to himſelf the beſt end*, viz. *The glory of God, and his own becoming like unto God.* Low and particular ends and intereſts both debaſe and ſtraiten a man's ſpirit: the univerſal, higheſt and laſt end both ennobles and enlarges it. A man is ſuch as the end is he aims at. The great power the end hath to mould and faſhion a man into its likeneſs. Religion obliges a man (not to ſeek himſelf, nor to drive a trade for himſelf; but) to ſeek the glory of God, to live wholly to him; and guides him ſteadily and uniformly to the one chief

chief good and laſt end. Men are prone to flatter themſelves with a pretended aiming at the glory of God. A more full and diſtinct explication of what is meant by a man's directing all his actions to the glory of God. What it is truly and really to glorify God. God ſeeking his glory in reſpect of us is the flowing forth of his goodneſs upon us: Our ſeeking the glory of God is our endeavouring to partake more of God, and to reſemble him (as much as we can) in true holineſs and every divine virtue. That we are not nicely to diſtinguiſh between the glory of God and our own ſalvation. That ſalvation is nothing elſe, for the main, but a true participation of the divine Nature. To love God above ourſelves, is not to love him above the ſalvation of our ſouls; but above our particular beings and above our ſinful affections, *&c.* The difference between things that are good relatively, and thoſe that are good abſolutely and eſſentially: that in our conformity to theſe God is moſt glorified, and we are made moſt happy, page 233.

*Chap.* VI. The fourth property or effect diſcovering the excellency of religion, *viz. That it begets the greateſt ſerenity and compoſedneſs of mind, and brings the trueſt contentment, the pureſt and moſt ſatisfying joy and pleaſure to every holy ſoul.* God, as being that uniform chief good, and the one laſt end, does attract and fix the ſoul. Wicked men diſtracted through a multiplicity of objects and ends. How the reſtleſs appetite of our wills after ſome ſupreme good leads to the knowledge (as of a Deity, ſo) of the unity of a Deity. How the joys and delights of good men differ from and far excel thoſe of the wicked. The conſtancy and tranquillity of the ſpirits of good men in reference to external troubles. All perturbations of the mind ariſe from an inward rather than an outward cauſe. The *Stoics* method for attaining ἀταραξία and true reſt examined, and the inſufficiency of it diſcovered. A further illuſtration of what has been ſaid concerning the peaceful and happy ſtate of good men, from the contrary ſtate of the wicked, p. 239.

*Chap.* VII. The fifth property or effect diſcovering the excellency of religion, *viz. That it advanceth the*

*ſoul*

*ſoul to an holy boldneſs and humble familiarity with God, and to a comfortable confidence concerning the love of God towards it, and its own ſalvation.* Fearfulneſs, conſternation of mind and frightful paſſions are conſequent upon ſin and guilt. Theſe together with the moſt diſmal deportments of trembling and amazement are agreeable to the nature of the devil, who delights to be ſerved in this manner by his worſhippers. Love, joy and hope are moſt agreeable to the nature of God, and moſt pleaſing to him. The right apprehenſions of God are ſuch as are apt to beget love to God, delight and confidence in him. A true chriſtian is more for a ſolid and well grounded peace than for high raptures and feelings of joy. How a Chriſtian ſhould endeavour the aſſurance of his ſalvation. That he ſhould not importunately expect or deſire ſome extraordinary manifeſtations of God to him, but rather look after the manifeſtation of the life of God within him, the foundation or beginning of heaven and ſalvation in his own ſoul. That ſelf-reſignation, and the ſubduing of our own wills, are greatly available to obtain aſſurance. The vanity and abſurdity of that opinion, *viz. That in a perfect reſignation of our wills to God's will, a man ſhould be content with his own damnation and to be the ſubject of eternal wrath in hell, if it ſhould ſo pleaſe God,* page 248.

*Chap.* VIII. The ſixth property or effect diſcovering the excellency of religion, *viz. That it ſpiritualizes material things, and carries up the ſouls of good men from ſenſible and earthly things to things intellectual and divine.* There are leſſer and fuller repreſentations of God in the creatures. To converſe with God in the creation, and to paſs out of the ſenſible world into the intellectual, is moſt effectually taught by religion. Wicked men converſe not with God as ſhining out in the creatures; they converſe with them in a ſenſual and unſpiritual manner. Religion does ſpiritualize the creation to good men: it teaches them to look at any perfections or excellencies in themſelves and others, not ſo much as theirs or others, but as ſo many beams flowing from

from one and the ſame fountain of light; to love them all in God, and God in all; the univerſal goodneſs in a particular being. A good man enjoys and delights in whatſoever good he ſees any where, as if it were his own: he does not fondly love and eſteem either himſelf or others. The divine temper and ſtrain of the antient philoſophy, page 253.

*Chap.* IX. The ſeventh and laſt property or effect diſcovering the excellency of religion, *viz. That it raiſeth the minds of good men to a due obſervance of, and attendance upon Divine providence, and enables them to ſerve the will of God, and to acquieſce in it.* For a man to ſerve providence and the will of God entirely, to work with God, and to bring himſelf and all his actions into a compliance with God's will, his ends and deſigns, is an argument of the trueſt nobleneſs of ſpirit; it is the moſt excellent and divine life; and it is moſt for a man's advantage. How the conſideration of divine providence is the way to inward quietneſs and eſtabliſhment of ſpirit. How wicked men carry themſelves unbecomingly through their impatience and fretfulneſs under the diſpoſals of providence. The beauty and harmony of the various methods of providence, p. 257.

*Chap.* X. 4. *The excellency of religion in regard of its progreſs.* As it is perpetually carrying on the ſoul towards perfection. Every nature hath its proper centre which it haſtens to. Sin and wickedneſs is within the attractive power of hell, and haſtens thither: grace and holineſs is within the central force of heaven, and moves thither. 'Tis not the ſpeculation of heaven as a thing to come that ſatisfies the deſires of religious ſouls, but the real poſſeſſion of it even in this life. Men are apt to ſeek after aſſurance of heaven as a thing to come, rather than after heaven itſelf and the inward poſſeſſion of it here. How the aſſurance of heaven riſes from the growth of holineſs, and the powerful progreſs of religion in our ſouls. That we are not haſtily to believe that we are Chriſt's, or that Chriſt is in us. That the works which Chriſt does in holy ſouls teſtify of him, and beſt evidence Chriſt's ſpiritual appearance in them, p. 260.

*Chap.*

*Chap.* XI. 5. *The excellency of religion in regard of its term and end,* viz. *perfect bleſſedneſs.* How unable we are in this ſtate to comprehend and deſcribe the full and perfect ſtate of happineſs and glory to come. The more Godlike a Chriſtian is, the better may he underſtand that ſtate. Holineſs and happineſs not two diſtinct things, but two ſeveral notions of one and the ſame thing. Heaven cannot ſo well be defined by any thing without us, as by ſomething within us. The great nearneſs and affinity between ſin and hell. The concluſion of this treatiſe, containing a ſerious exhortation to a diligent minding of religion, with a diſcovery of the vanity of thoſe pretences which keep men off from minding religion, page 263.

## DISCOURSE IX.

## The Conflicts and Conqueſts of a Chriſtian.

*CHAP.* I. The introduction, ſummarily treating of the perpetual enmity between God, the principle of good, and the principle of evil, the devil: as alſo between whatſoever is from God and that which is from the devil. That wicked men by deſtroying what there is from God within them, and diveſting themſelves of all that which hath any alliance to God or true goodneſs, and transforming themſelves into the diabolical image, fit themſelves for correſpondence and converſe with the devil. The fears and horrors which infeſt both the apoſtate ſpirits and wicked men. The weakneſs of the devil's kingdom; Chriſt's ſucceſs againſt it, p. 273.

*Chap.* II. The firſt obſervation, *That the devil is continually buſie with us.* The devil conſidered under a double notion. 1. As an apoſtate ſpirit which fell from God. The great danger of the devil's activity, not only when he preſents himſelf in ſome corporeal ſhape, but when he is unſeen and appears not. The weakneſs and folly of thoſe who are afraid of him only when he appears embodied. That the good Spirit of God is active for the

the good of ſouls. How regardleſs men are of the gentle motions of the divine Spirit; and how unwatchful and ſecure under the ſuggeſtions of the evil ſpirit. How we may diſcover the devil in his ſtratagems, and under his ſeveral diſguiſes and appearances, page. 276.

*Chap.* III. 2. Of the activity of the devil conſidered as a ſpirit of apoſtaſy and as a degenerate nature in men. That the devil is not only the name of one particular thing, but a nature. The difference between the devil and wicked men is rather the difference of a name than of natures. The kingdom and tyranny of the devil and hell is chiefly within, in the qualities and diſpoſitions of men's minds. Men are apt to quarrel with the devil in the name and notion, and defy him with their tongues, while they entertain him in their hearts, and comply with all that which the devil is. The vanity of their pretended love to God, and hatred of the devil. That there is nothing better than God himſelf, for which we ſhould love him; and to love him for his own beauty and excellency is the beſt way of loving him. That there is nothing worſe than ſin itſelf, for which we ſhould hate it; and to hate it for its own deformity is the trueſt way of hating it. How hell and miſery ariſes from within men. Why wicked men are ſo inſenſible of their miſery in this life, p. 278.

*Chap.* IV. The ſecond obſervation, *viz. The warfare of a chriſtian life.* True religion conſiſts not in a mere paſſive capacity and ſluggiſh kind of doing nothing, nor in a melancholy ſitting ſtill or ſlothful waiting, *&c.* but it conſiſts in inward life and power, vigour and activity. A diſcovery of the dulneſs and erroneouſneſs of that hypotheſis, *viz.* That good men are wholly paſſive and unable at any time to move without ſome external *impetus*, ſome impreſſion and impulſe from without upon them: or, that all motions in religion are from an external principle. Of the quality and nature of the true ſpiritual warfare, and, of the manner and method of it. That it is tranſacted upon the inner ſtage of men's ſouls, and managed without noiſe or pompous obſervation; and without any hindrance or prejudice to the moſt peaceful, ſedate and compoſed temper of a religious ſoul.

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This further illuſtrated from the conſideration of the falſe and pretended zeal for God and his kingdom againſt the devil; which, though it be impetuous, and makes a great noiſe, and a fair ſhew in the world, is yet both impotent and ineffectual, page 283.

*Chap.* V. The third obſervation, *viz. The certainty of ſucceſs and victory to all thoſe that reſiſt the devil.* This grounded upon, 1. The weakneſs of the devil and ſin conſidered in themſelves. 2. God's powerful aſſiſting all faithful chriſtians in this warfare. The devil may allure and tempt, but cannot prevail, except men conſent and yield to his ſuggeſtions. The devil's ſtrength lies in men's treachery and falſeneſs to their own ſouls. Sin is ſtrong, becauſe men oppoſe it weakly. The error of the *Manichæans* about a *principium mali* defended by men in their lives and practices. Of God's readineſs to aſſiſt chriſtians in their ſpiritual conflicts; his compaſſionate regards and the more ſpecial reſpects of his providence towards them in ſuch occaſions. The concluſion, diſcovering the evil and horridneſs of magic, diabolical contracts, *&c.* p. 287.

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# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

# The TRUE METHOD

OF ATTAINING

# DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

PSAL. iii. 10.
*The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wiſdom: a good Underſtanding have all they that do his Commandments.*

JOHN vii. 17.
*If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God*

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# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

# The True Method of attaining

# DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

## SECT. I.

IT hath been long ſince well obſerved, That every ſcience hath ſome certain principles upon which the whole frame of it muſt depend; and he that will fully acquaint himſelf with the myſteries thereof, muſt come furniſhed with ſome pre-eſtabliſhed opinions *. Were I indeed to define divinity, I ſhould rather call it *a divine life*, than *a divine ſcience*; it being ſomething rather to be underſtood by a ſpiritual ſenſation, than by any verbal deſcription, as all things of ſenſe and life are beſt known by ſentient and vital faculties. Every thing is beſt known by that which bears a juſt reſemblance and analogy with it †: and therefore the Scripture is wont to ſet forth a good life as the fundamental

* *Præcognita* or προλήψεις, that I may ſpeak in the language of the *Stoicks*.

† γνῶσις ἐκάστων δι' ὁμοιότητος γίνεται, as the Greek Philoſopher hath well obſerved.

fundamental principle of divine ſcience; *Wiſdom hath built her an houſe, and hewn out her ſeven pillars*, Prov. ix. 1. But *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom*, Job. xxviii. 28. the foundation of the whole fabrick.

We ſhall therefore, as a preface to what we ſhall afterwards diſcourſe upon the heads of divinity, ſpeak ſomething of this *true method of knowing*, which is not ſo much by notions as actions; as religion itſelf conſiſts not ſo much in words as in things. They are not always the beſt ſkilled in divinity, that are the moſt verſant in thoſe ſyſtems into which it is ſometimes digeſted, or that have erected the greateſt monopolies of art and ſcience. He that is moſt practical in divine things, hath the pureſt and ſincereſt knowledge of them, and not he that is moſt dogmatical. Divinity indeed is a true efflux from the Eternal light, which, like the ſun-beams, does not only enlighten, but warm and enliven; and therefore our Saviour hath in his Beatitudes connected purity of heart with the beatifical viſion. And, as the eye cannot behold the ſun, unleſs it be ſunlike *, and hath the form and reſemblance of the ſun drawn in it; ſo neither can the ſoul of man behold God, unleſs it be Godlike †, hath God formed in it, and be made partaker of the divine nature. And the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, when he would lay open the right way of attaining to divine truth, ſaith, that *knowledge puffeth up*, but it is *love that edifieth*, 1 Cor. viii. 1. The knowledge of divinity that appears in ſyſtems and models is but a poor wan light; but the powerful energy of divine knowledge diſplays itſelf in purified ſouls: here we ſhall indeed find the land of truth ‡.

To ſeek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to ſeek the living among the dead: we do but in vain ſeek God many times in theſe, where his truth too often is not ſo much enſhrined as entombed: no; ſeek for God within thine own ſoul ‖: he is beſt diſcerned

* ἡλιοειδὴς μὴ γινόμενος.
† θεοειδὴς μὴ γινομένη.
‡ πεδίον ἀληθείας, as the antient philoſophy ſpeaks.
‖ Intra te quære Deum.

cerned by an intellectual touch of him *; we muſt *ſee with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and our hands muſt handle the word of life*, that I may expreſs it in St. *John*'s words, 1 Ep. i. 1. The ſoul itſelf hath its ſenſe, as well as the body †, and therefore *David*, when he would teach us how to know what the divine goodneſs is, calls not for ſpeculation but ſenſation, *Taſte and ſee how good the Lord is*, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. That is not the beſt and trueſt knowledge of God which is wrought out by the labour of the brain, but that which is kindled within us by an heavenly warmth in our hearts. As in the natural body it is the heart that ſends up pure blood and lively ſpirits into the head, whereby it is enabled to perform its ſeveral functions; ſo that which enables us to know and underſtand aright in the things of God, muſt be a living principle of holineſs within us. When the tree of knowledge is not planted by the tree of life, and derives not its ſap from thence, it may be as well productive of evil as good, and bring forth bitter fruit as well as ſweet. If we would indeed have our knowledge thrive and flouriſh, we muſt water the tender plants of it with holineſs. When *Zoroaſter*'s ſcholars aſked him, what they ſhould do to get *winged ſouls*, ſuch as might ſoar aloft in the bright beams of divine truth, he bids them bathe themſelves in *the waters of life:* they aſking what they were; he tells them, *the four cardinal virtues*, which are *the four rivers of paradiſe.* It is but a thin, airy knowledge that is got by mere ſpeculation, which is uſhered in by ſyllogiſms and demonſtrations; but that which ſprings forth from true goodneſs, brings ſuch a divine light into the ſoul, as is more clear and convincing than any demonſtration ‡. The reaſon why, notwithſtanding all our acute reaſons and ſubtile diſputes, truth prevails no more in the world, is, that we ſo often disjoin truth and true goodneſs, which in themſelves can never be diſunited; they grow both from the ſame root, and live in one another. We may, like thoſe in *Plato*'s deep pit with their faces bend-



* νοερᾷ ἁφῇ, as *Plotinus* phraſeth it.

† Ἔστι γὰρ ψυχῆς αἴσθησίς τις.

‡ δεύτερόν τι πάσης ἀποδείξεως, as *Origen* ſpeaks.

ed downwards, converſe with ſounds and ſhadows; but not with the life and ſubſtance of truth, while our ſouls remain defiled with any vice or luſt. Sin is that lake of oblivion in which the ſouls of men are immerſed: he that wants true virtue, in heaven's logic, *is blind, and cannot ſee afar off*, 2 Pet. i. 9. Thoſe filthy miſts that ariſe from impure and earthly minds, like an atmoſphere, perpetually incompaſs them, that they cannot ſee that ſun of divine truth which ſhines about them, but never ſhines into any unpurged ſouls; the darkneſs comprehends it not, the fooliſh man underſtands it not. All the light and knowledge that may ſeem ſometimes to riſe up in unhallowed minds, is but like thoſe ſooty flames that ariſing up from a common furnace, are ſoon quenched in their own ſmoak; or like thoſe fires that have their birth from earthly vapours, that do but flit to and fro upon the ſurface of this earth, where they were firſt brought forth: and ſerve not ſo much to enlighten, as to delude us; not to direct the wandring traveller into his way, but to lead him farther out of it. While we lodge any filthy vice in us, this will be perpetually twiſting itſelf into the thread of our fineſt ſpun ſpeculations; like the ivy twiſting itſelf about the oak, it will twine about our judgments and underſtandings, till it hath ſucked out the life and ſpirit of them. I cannot think that ſuch oblivion could poſſeſs the minds of ſome, as to make them queſtion that truth which to good men ſhines as bright as the ſun at noon-day, had they not foully defiled their own ſouls with ſome helliſh vice or other, how fairly ſoever it may be they may diſſemble it. There is a benumbing ſpirit, a congealing vapour that ariſeth from ſin and vice, which will ſtupify the ſenſes of the ſoul; as the Naturaliſts ſay there is from the *torpedo* that ſmites the ſenſes of thoſe that approach to it. This is that venemous deadly nightſhade which inſtills its cold poiſon into the underſtandings of men.

Such as men themſelves are, ſuch will God himſelf ſeem to be. It is the maxim of moſt wicked men, that the Deity is ſome way or other like themſelves: their ſouls do more than whiſper it, tho' their lips ſpeak it not; and tho' their tongues be ſilent, yet their lives

cry

cry it upon the houſe tops, and in the public ſtreets. That idea which men generally have of God is nothing elſe but the picture of their own complexion: that notion of him which hath the ſupremacy in their minds, is none elſe but ſuch an one as hath been ſhap'd out according to ſome pattern of themſelves; tho' they may ſo clothe and diſguiſe this idol of their own, when they carry it about in a pompous proceſſion to expoſe it to the view of the world, that it may ſeem very beautiful, and indeed any thing elſe rather than what it is. Moſt men (tho' it may be they themſelves take no great notice of it) are of a different judgment in their public profeſſion, from what they are in the retirements of of their private cloſets*. There is a double head, as well as a double heart; men's corrupt hearts will not ſuffer their notions and conceptions of divine things to be caſt in the form that an higher reaſon, which may ſometime work within them, would mould them into.

I would not be thought all this while to baniſh the belief of all innate notions of divine truth: but theſe are too often ſtained with a deep dye of mens filthy luſts. It is but light buried and ſtifled in ſome dark body, from whence all thoſe diſcoloured notions and apprehenſions of divine things are begotten. Tho' theſe common notions may be very buſy ſometimes in the vegetation of divine knowledge; yet the corrupt vices of men may ſo clog, diſturb and over-rule them †, that they may produce nothing but monſters, miſerably diſtorted and miſhapen. This kind of ſcience, *companying too familiarly with matter, and receiving and imbibing it into itſelf, changeth its ſhape by this inceſtuous mixture* ‡. At beſt, while any inward luſt is harboured in the minds of men, it will ſo weaken them, that they can never bring forth any maſculine or generous knowledge.

* Their cuſtom is, like that diſſembling Monk, *aliter ſentire in ſcholis, aliter in muſcis.*

† As the Naturaliſts ſay, this unruly and maſterleſs matter doth the natural forms in the formation of living creatures.

‡ τῷ ὑλικῷ πολλῷ συνοῦσα, καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν εἰσδεξαμένη, ἄδος ἕτερον ἠλλάξατο κράσει τῇ πρὸς τὸ χεῖρον, as *Plotinus* ſpeaks.

ledge *. Sin and luſt are always of a hungry nature, and ſuck up all thoſe vital affections of mens ſouls, which ſhould feed and nouriſh their underſtandings.

What are all our moſt ſublime ſpeculations of the Deity, that are not impregnated with true goodneſs, but inſipid things that have no taſte nor life in them, that do but ſwell like empty froth in the ſouls of men? They do not feed mens ſouls, but only puff them up and fill them with pride, arrogance, and tyranny towards thoſe who cannot well underſtand their ſubtile curioſities: as thoſe philoſophers who made their knowledge only matter of oſtentation, to ſet off themſelves, but never took any care to ſquare and govern their lives by it †. Such as theſe do but ſpider-like take a great deal of pains to ſpin a worthleſs web out of their own bowels, which will not keep them warm. Theſe indeed are thoſe ſilly ſouls that are *ever learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth*, 2 Tim. iii. 7. They may, with *Pharaoh*'s lean kine, eat up and devour all languages and ſciences, and yet, when they have done, ſtill remain lean and ill-favoured as they were at firſt. Barren ſpeculations may be hovering and fluttering up and down about divinity, but they cannot ſettle or fix themſelves upon it: they unfold the garment of truth, but they cannot behold the lovely form of it. There are hidden myſteries in divine truth, wrapt up one within another, which cannot be diſcerned but by them who have been initiated in the divine myſteries.

We muſt not think we have then attained to the right knowledge of truth, when we have broken thro' the outward ſhell of words and phraſes that houſe it up; or when by a logical analyſis we have found out the dependencies and coherencies of them one with another; or when, like ſtout champions of it, having well guarded it with the invincible ſtrength of our demonſtration, we

* As *Ælian* obſerves of the ſtork, that if the night-owl chanceth to ſit upon her eggs, they become preſently as it were ἀπνεύματα, and all incubation rendered impotent and ineffectual.

† Qui diſciplinam ſuam oſtentationem ſcientiæ, non legem vitæ, putabant. *Cicero.*

we dare ſtand out in the face of the world, and challenge the field of all thoſe that would pretend to be our rivals.

We have many grave and reverend idolaters that worſhip truth only in the image of their own wits; that could never adore it ſo much as they may ſeem to do, were it any thing elſe but ſuch a form of belief as their own wandering ſpeculations had at laſt met together in, were it not that they find their own image and ſuperſcription upon it.

There is a *knowing of the truth as it is in Jeſus*, as it is in a Chriſt-like nature, as it is in that ſweet, mild, humble, and loving Spirit of Jeſus, which ſpreads itſelf like a morning-ſun upon the ſouls of good men, full of light and life. It profits little to know Chriſt himſelf after the fleſh; but he gives his Spirit to good men, that ſearcheth the deep things of God. There is an inward beauty, life and lovelineſs in divine truth, which can then only be known when it is digeſted into life and practice. The Greek Philoſopher could tell the high-ſoaring Gnoſtics, *To look upon God* *; that *without virtue and real goodneſs, God is but a name* †, a dry and empty notion. The profane ſort of men, like thoſe old Gentile Greeks, may make many ruptures in the walls of God's temple, and break into the holy ground, but yet may find God no more there than they did.

Divine truth is better underſtood, as it unfolds itſelf in the purity of mens hearts and lives, than in all thoſe ſubtile niceties into which curious wits may lay it forth. And therefore our Saviour, who is the great maſter of it, would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into any ſyſtem or body, nor would his diſciples after him; he would not lay it out to us in any canons or articles of belief, not being indeed ſo careful to ſtock and enrich the world with opinions and notions, as with true piety, and a Godlike pattern of purity, as the beſt way to thrive in all ſpiritual underſtanding. His main ſcope

* βλέπε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν.

† ἄνευ ἀρετῆς Θεὸς ὄνομα μόνον.

ſcope was to promote an holy life, as the beſt and moſt compendious way to a right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance with divinity upon the doing God's will, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God*, John vii. 17. This is that alone which will make us, as St. *Peter* tells us, *neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour*, 2 Pet. i. 8. There is an inward ſweetneſs and deliciouſneſs in divine truth, which no ſenſual mind can taſte or reliſh: this is that natural man that ſavours not the things of God. Corrupt paſſions and earthly affections are apt of their own nature to diſturb all ſerene thoughts, to precipitate our judgments, and warp our underſtandings. It was a good maxim of the old Jewiſh writers, *The holy Spirit dwells not in earthly paſſions*. Divinity is not ſo well perceived by a ſubtile wit, *as by a purified ſenſe* †.

Neither was the antient philoſophy unacquainted with this way and method of attaining to the knowledge of divine things; and therefore ‡ *Ariſtotle* himſelf thought a young man unfit to meddle with the grave precepts of morality, till the heat and violent precipitancy of his youthful affections was cooled and moderated. And it is obſerved of *Pythagoras*, that he had ſeveral ways to try the capacity of his ſcholars, and to prove the ſedateneſs and moral temper of their minds, before he would entruſt them with the ſublimer myſteries of his philoſophy. The *Platoniſts* were herein ſo wary and ſolicitous, that they thought the minds of men could never be purged enough from thoſe earthly dregs of ſenſe and paſſion, in which they were ſo much ſteeped, before they could be capable of their divine metaphyſics: and therefore they ſo much ſollicit *a ſeparation from the body* ‖, in all thoſe that would, as *Socrates* ſpeak, *ſincerely underſtand divine truth* **; for that was the ſcope of their philoſophy. This was alſo intimated by them in their

† ὥσπερ αἰσθήσει κεκαθαρμένῃ, as *Plotinus* phraſeth it.
‡ *Eth. Nicom.* l. 1.
‖ χωρισμὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος.
** καθαρῶς φιλοσοφεῖν.

their defining philoſophy to be *a meditation of death* *; aiming herein at only a moral way of dying, by looſening the ſoul from the body and this ſenſitive life; which they thought was neceſſary to a right contemplation of intelligible things: and therefore, beſides thoſe cleanſing virtues †, by which the ſouls of men were to be ſeparated from ſenſuality and cleanſed from fleſhly corruption, they deviſed a further way of ſeparation more accommodated to the condition of philoſophers, which was their mathematical contemplations, whereby the ſouls of men might farther ſhake off their dependency upon ſenſe, and learn to go as it were alone, without the crutch of any ſenſible or material thing to ſupport them; and ſo be a little inured, being once got up above the body, to converſe freely with immaterial natures, without looking down again and falling back into ſenſe. Beſides many other ways they had, whereby to riſe out of this dark body; ſeveral ſteps and aſcents out of this miry cave of mortality ‡, before they could get any ſure footing with their intellectual part in the land of light and immortal being.

And thus we ſhould paſs from this topic of our diſcourſe, upon which we have already dwelt too long; but that before we quite let it go, I hope we may fairly make this farther uſe of it (beſides that to which we have openly tended all this while) which is, to learn not to devote or give up our ſelves to any private opinions or dictates of men in matters of religion, nor too jealouſly to attack the opinions of any ſect. As we ſhould not, like rigid cenſurers, arraign and condemn the creeds of other men with which we comply not, before a full and mature underſtanding of them, ripened not only by the natural ſagacity of our own reaſon, but by the benign influence of holy and mortified affection: neither ſhould we over-haſtily ſubſcribe to the ſymbols and articles of other men. They are not always the beſt men who blot moſt paper; truth is not, I believe, ſo voluminous, nor ſwells into ſuch a mighty bulk as our

* μελέτη θανάτου.

† ἀρεταὶ καθαρτικαί.

‡ ἀναβάσεις ἐκ τῦ σπηλαίυ, as they are wont to call them.

our books do. Thoſe minds are not always the moſt chaſt that are moſt fruitful in theſe learned diſcourſes, which too often bear upon them a foul ſtain of their unlawful propagation. A bitter juice of corrupt affections may ſometimes be ſtrained into the ink of our greateſt ſcholars. We are not always happy in meeting with that wholſome food (as ſome are wont to call the doctrinal part of religion) which hath been prepared by the pureſt hands. Some men have too bad hearts to have good heads: they cannot be good at theory who have been ſo bad at the practice, as we may juſtly fear too many of thoſe, from whom we are apt to take the articles of our belief, have been. Whilſt we plead ſo much our right to the patrimony of our fathers, we may take too faſt a poſſeſſion of their errors as well as of their ſober opinions. Innate prejudices, and deceitful hypotheſes, which many times wander up and down in the minds of good men, may fly out from them with their graver determinations. We can never be well aſſured what our traditional divinity is; nor can we ſecurely enough addict ourſelves to any ſect of men. That which was the Philoſopher's motto, we may a little enlarge, and ſo fit it for an ingenuous purſuer after divine truth: he that will find truth, muſt ſeek it with a free judgment, and a ſanctified mind *: he that thus ſeeks, ſhall find; he ſhall live in truth, and that truth live in him; it ſhall be like a ſtream of living water iſſuing out of his own ſoul; he ſhall drink the water of his own ciſtern, and be ſatisfied; he ſhall every morning find this heavenly *Manna* in his own ſoul, and be fed with it to eternal life; he will find ſatisfaction within, feeling himſelf in conjunction with truth, though all the world ſhould diſpute againſt him.

SECT

* Ἐλεύθερον εἶναι δεῖ τῇ γνώμῃ τὸν μέλλοντα φιλοσοφεῖν,

## SECTION II.

AND thus I ſhould again leave this argument, but that perhaps we may all this while have ſeemed to undermine what we intend to build up. For if Divine Truth ſpring up only from the root of true goodneſs; how ſhall we ever endeavour to be good, before we know what it is to be ſo? or how ſhall we convince the the gainſaying world of truth, unleſs we could alſo inſpire virtue into it?

To both which we ſhall make this reply, that there are ſome radical principles of knowledge which are ſo deeply ſunk into the ſouls of men, as that the impreſſion cannot eaſily be obliterated, tho' it may be much impaired. Senſual baſeneſs doth not ſo groſly fully the ſouls of all wicked men at firſt, as to make them with *Diagoras* to deny the Deity, or with *Protagoras* to doubt of, or with *Diodorus* to queſtion the immortality of rational ſouls. Neither are the common principles of virtue ſo pulled up by the roots in all, as to make them ſo dubious in ſtating the bounds of virtue and vice as *Epicurus* was, tho' he could not but ſometimes take notice of them. Neither is the retentive power of truth ſo weak and looſe in all Sceptics, as it was in him, who being well ſcourged in the ſtreets till the blood ran about him, queſtioned when he came home, whether he had been beaten or not. *Arrianus* hath well obſerved, that the common notions of God and virtue impreſſed upon the ſouls of men, are more clear and perſpicuous than any elſe; and that if they have not more certainty, yet have they more evidence, and diſplay themſelves with leſs difficulty to our reflective faculty than any geometrical demonſtrations: and theſe when well guided by a ſkillful hand, are both available to preſcribe out ways of virtue to mens own ſouls, and to force an acknowledgment of truth from thoſe that oppoſe. Truth needs not at any time fly from reaſon, there being an eternal amity between them. They are only ſome private opi-

nions that may well be ſuſpected as ſpurious and adulterate, which dare not abide the trial thereof. And this reaſon is not every where ſo cloſed up, as that we may not by that enter into the ſouls of men. What the magnetical virtue is in theſe earthly bodies, that reaſon is in mens minds, which when it is put forth, draws them one to another. Beſides in wicked men there are ſometimes diſtaſtes of vice, and flaſhes of love to virtue; which are the motions which ſpring from a true intellect, and the faint ſtrugglings of a higher life within them, which they ſtiffle again by their wicked ſenſuality. As truth doth not always act in good men, ſo neither doth ſenſe always act in wicked men: they may ſometimes have their lucid intervals and ſober fits; and a divine Spirit breathing upon them, may then blow up ſome live ſparks of true underſtanding within them; though they may ſoon endeavour to quench them again, and to rake them up in the aſhes of their own earthly thoughts.

All this, and more that might be ſaid upon this argument, may ſerve to point out the way of virtue. We want not ſo much means of knowing what we ought to do, as wills to do that which we may know. But yet all that knowledge which is ſeparated from an inward acquaintance with virtue and goodneſs, is of a far different nature from that which ariſeth out of a true living ſenſe of them, which is the beſt diſcerner thereof, and by which alone we know the true perfection, ſweetneſs, energy, and lovelineſs of them, and all that which can neither be expreſſed in words nor writings *, that which can no more be known by a naked demonſtration, than colours can be perceived of a blind man by any definition or deſcription which he can hear of them.

And further, the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct notions of truth that ſhine in the ſouls of the common ſort of men, may be extremely clouded, if they be not accompanied with that anſwerable practice which might preſerve their integrity: theſe tender plants may ſoon be ſpoiled by the continual droppings of our corrupt affections

* ὔτε ῥητὸν, ὔτε γραπτὸν.

fections upon them; they are but of a weak and feminine nature, and ſo may be ſooner deceived by that wily ſerpent of ſenſuality that harbours within us.

While the ſoul is full of the body *, while we ſuffer thoſe notions and common principles of religion to ly aſleep within us; the power of an animal life † will be apt to incorporate and mingle itſelf with them; and that reaſon that is within us, becomes more and more infected with thoſe evil opinions that ariſe from our corporeal life. ‡ The more deeply our ſouls dive into our bodies, the more will reaſon and ſenſuality run one into another, and make up a moſt dilute, and muddy kind of knowledge. We muſt therefore endeavour more and more to withdraw ourſelves from theſe bodily things, to ſet our ſoul as free as may be from its miſerable ſlavery to this baſe fleſh: we muſt ſhut the eyes of ſenſe, and open that brighter eye of our underſtandings, that other eye of the ſoul, as the Philoſopher calls our intellectual faculty, *which indeed all have, but few employ* ‖. This is the way to ſee clearly; the light of the Divine world will then begin to fall upon us, and thoſe ſacred and pure coruſcations of immortal and ever-living truth will ſhine into us, and in God's own light ſhall we behold him. The fruit of this knowledge will be ſweet to our taſte, and pleaſant to our palates, *ſweeter than the honey or the honey-comb*, Pſalm. xix, 10. The prieſts of *Mercury*, in the eating of their holy things, were wont to cry out, *Sweet is truth* **. But how ſweet and delicious that truth is which holy and heaven-born ſouls feed upon in their myſterious converſe with the Deity, who can tell but they that taſte it? When reaſon once is raiſed by the mighty force of the divine Spirit into a converſe with God, it is turned into ſenſe: that which before was only faith well built upon ſure principles, (for ſuch our



* πλήρης τῦ σώματος.

† γενεσιυργὸς δύναμις.

‡ σύμφυτος κακαῖς ταις ἐπιγινομέναις δόξαις, as *Plotinus* hath well expreſſed it.

‖ ἣν ἔχει μὲν πᾶς, χρῶνται δὲ ὀλίγοι.

** γλυκὺ ἡ ἀλήθεια, Plutarch.

ſcience may be) now becomes viſion. We ſhall then converſe in our mind with God, whereas before we converſed with him only with our diſcurſive faculty *. Before we laid hold on him only with a wreſtling reaſon †, hotly combating with difficulties and ſharp conteſts of divers opinions, and labouring in itſelf, in its deductions of one thing from another; we ſhall then faſten our minds upon him with ſuch a *ſerene underſtanding*, ſuch an *intellectual calmneſs* ‡ as will preſent us with a bliſsful, ſteady, and invariable ſight of him.

## SECTION III.

AND now if you pleaſe, ſetting aſide the Epicurean herd of brutiſh men, who have drowned all their own ſober reaſon in the deepeſt *Lethe* of ſenſuality, we ſhall divide the reſt of men into theſe four ranks, according to that method which *Simplicius* upon *Epictetus* hath already laid out to us, with a reſpect to a fourfold kind of knowledge at which we have all this while glanced.

The firſt whereof is, That complex man, made up of ſoul and body ‖, as it were by a juſt equality and arithmetical proportion of parts and powers in each of them. The knowledge of theſe men I ſhould call a knowledge, wherein ſenſe and reaſon are ſo twiſted up together **, that it cannot eaſily be unravelled and laid out into its firſt principles; their higheſt reaſon conſiſts in the complying with their ſenſes ††, and both their reaſon and

* τῷ νῷ, and not only τῇ διανοίᾳ, as the Platoniſts were wont to diſtinguiſh.

† λόγῳ ἀποδεικλικῷ,

‡ λόγῳ ἀποραντικῷ, καὶ γαλήνῃ νοερᾷ,

‖ Ανθρωπος συμπεφυρμένος τῇ γενέσει, or if you will, ἄνθρωπος ὁ πολύς,

** ἀμυδρὸν δόξαν in Plutarch's phraſe.

†† ὁμόδοξος ταις αἰσθήσεσι.

and ſenſes conſpire together in vulgar opinion. To theſe the motto which the *Stoicks* have made for them may very well agree, *Life is opinion*, their life being ſteered by nothing elſe but opinion and imagination *. Their higher notions of God and religion are ſo entangled with the birdlime of fleſhly paſſions and worldly vanity, that they cannot riſe up above the ſurface of this dark earth, or eaſily entertain any but earthly conceptions of heavenly things. Such ſouls as are here lodged have a weight at them †, and are continually preſſing down to this world's centre: and though, like the ſpider, they may appear ſometime moving up and down aloft in the air, yet they do but ſit in the loom, and move in that web of their own groſs fancies, which they faſten to ſome earthly thing or other.

The ſecond is, The man that looks at himſelf as being what he is rather by his ſoul than by his body ‡, who thinks not fit to view his own face in any other glaſs but that of reaſon and underſtanding; who reckons upon his ſoul as that which was made to rule, his body as that which was born to obey, and like an handmaid perpetually to wait upon his higher and nobler part. And in ſuch an one the common principles of virtue and goodneſs, are more clear and ſteady. To ſuch an one we may allow more clear and diſtinct opinions ‖, as being already in a method or courſe of purgation, or at leaſt fit to be initiated into the leſſer myſteries of religion. For though theſe innate notions of truth may be but poor, and empty things of themſelves before they be fed and filled with the practice of true virtue; yet they are capable of the rules and precepts of it. And therefore the Stoick ſuppoſed that the doctrine of political and moral virtues was fit to be delivered to ſuch as theſe **; and though they may not be ſo well prepared



* βίος ὑπόληψις.

† ἀποσθαρᾶς, as *Plato* ſpeaks.

‡ ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τὴν λογικὴν ζωὴν ὑσίωμένος.

‖ τρανεσέραν ϗ ἐμφανεσέραν δόξαν.

** ὅτι τοιούτῳ προσήκουσιν αἱ ἠθικαὶ ϗ πολιτικαὶ ἀρεταί.

for divine virtue (which is of an higher emanation) yet they are not immature for human, as having the ſeeds of it already within themſelves, which being watered by anſwerable practice, may ſprout up within them,

The third is, He whoſe ſoul is already purged by this lower ſort of virtue *, and ſo is continually flying off from the body and bodily paſſion, and returning into himſelf. Such in St. *Peter*'s language are thoſe *who have eſcaped the pollutions which are in the world through luſt.* 2 *Pet.* ii. 20. To theſe we may attribute a lower degree of ſcience †, their inward ſenſe of virtue and moral goodneſs far tranſcending all mere ſpeculative opinions of it. But if this knowledge ſettle here, it may be quickly apt to corrupt. Many of our moſt refined moraliſts may be full with their own pregnancy ‡; their ſouls may too much heave and ſwell with the ſenſe of their own virtue and knowledge: there may be an evil ferment of ſelf-love lying at the bottom, which may puff it up the more with pride, arrogance, and ſelf-conceit. Theſe forces with which the divine Bounty ſupplies us to keep a ſtronger guard againſt the evil ſpirit, may be abuſed by our own rebellious pride, enticing them from their allegiance to God, to ſtrengthen itſelf in our ſouls, and fortify them againſt heaven: like that ſupercilious Stoick, who when he thought his mind well armed and appointed with wiſdom and virtue, cried out, *The wiſe man, may in happineſs rival* Jupiter *himſelf* ‖. They may make an airy heaven of theſe, and wall it about with their own ſelf-flattery, and then ſit in it as gods, as *Coſroes* the *Perſian* king was ſometime laughed at for enſhrining himſelf in a temple of his own. And therefore if this knowledge be not attended with humility and a deep ſenſe of ſelf-penury and ſelf-emptineſs, we may eaſily fall ſhort of that true knowledge of God after which we ſeem to aſpire. We may carry ſuch an image of ourſelves conſtantly before us, as will make us

* Ἄνθρωπος ἤδη κεκαθαρμένος.

† νόϑη ἐπιστήμη.

‡ in a worſe ſenſe than *Plotinus* means, πληρωϑέντες τῇ ἑαυτῶν φύσει.

‖ *Sapiens contendet cum ipſo Jove de felicitate.*

us loſe the clear ſight of the Divinity, and be too apt to reſt in a mere *logical life* *, without any true participation of the divine life, if we do not (as many do, if not all, who riſe no higher) relapſe and ſlide back by vain-glory, popularity, or ſuch like vices, into ſome worldly and external vanity or other.

The fourth is, The true metaphyſical and contemplative man, who running and ſhooting up above his own logical or ſelf-rational life, pierceth into the higheſt life †: ſuch a one, who by univerſal love and holy affection abſtracting himſelf from himſelf, endeavours the neareſt union with the divine Eſſence that may be, knitting his own centre, if he have any, unto the centre of divine being ‡. To ſuch an one the *Platoniſts* are wont to attribute a true divine wiſdom, powerfully diſplaying itſelf in an intellectual life ‖, as they phraſe it. Such a knowledge, they ſay, is always pregnant with Divine virtue, which ariſeth out of an happy union of ſouls with God, and is nothing elſe but a living imitation of a Godlike perfection drawn out by a ſtrong fervent love of it. This divine knowledge makes us amorous of divine beauty, beautiful and lovely; and this divine love and purity reciprocally exalts divine knowledge **. Tho', by the leave of the *Platoniſts*, ſuch a life and knowledge as this is, peculiarly belongs to the true and ſober chriſtian, who lives in him who is life itſelf, and is inlightned by him who is the truth itſelf, and is made partaker of *the Divine unction, and knoweth all things*, 1 *John*. iii. 20. This life is nothing elſe but God's own breath within him, and an *Infant-Chriſt* (if I may uſe the expreſſion) formed in his ſoul, who is in one ſenſe *the ſhining forth of the Father's glory* ††.

But

* an expreſſion of *Simplicius*.

† Ἄνθρωπος θεωρητικὸς, ὃς τὴν ἑαυτῦ λογικὴν ζωὴν ὑπερῆρχων, ὅλως εἶναι βέλεται τῶν κρειττόνων.

‡ κέντρον κέντρῳ συνάψας, as *Plotinus* ſpeaks.

‖ θείαν ἐπιστήμην, ἐν νοερᾷ ζωῇ.

** both of them growing up together like that Ἔρως and Ἀντέρως that *Pauſanias* ſometimes ſpeaks of.

†† ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης.

But yet we muſt not miſtake; this knowledge is but here in its infancy; there is an higher knowledge, or an higher degree of this knowledge, that doth not, that cannot, deſcend upon us in theſe earthly habitations. We cannot here ſee in a clear mirror; here we can ſee *but in a glaſs* and that *darkly* too, 1 *Corinth.* xiii. 12. Our own imaginative powers, which are perpetually attending the higheſt acts of our ſouls, will be breathing a groſs dew upon the pure glaſs of our underſtandings, and ſo fully it, that we cannot ſee the image of the divinity diſtinctly in it. But yet this knowledge being a true heavenly fire kindled from God's own altar, begets an undaunted courage in the ſouls of good men, and enables them to regard with an holy ſcorn, the poor petty traſh of this life, in compariſon with Divine things, and to pity thoſe poor brutiſh Epicureans who have nothing but the mere huſks of fleſhly pleaſure wherewith to feed themſelves. This ſight of God makes pious ſouls breath after that bleſſed time when mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life, when they ſhall no more behold the Divinity through thoſe dark mediums which now eclipſe the bleſſed ſight of it.

A

# SHORT DISCOURSE

OF

# SUPERSTITION.

A

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# SUPERSTITION.

HAVING now done with what we propounded as a preface to our following diſcourſes, we ſhould now come to treat of the chief principles of religion. But, before we do that, perhaps it may not be amiſs to inquire into ſome of thoſe Antideities that are ſet up againſt it, the chief whereof are ATHEISM and SUPERSTITION; which indeed may ſeem to comprehend in them all kind of apoſtaſy and prevarication from religion. We ſhall not be over-curious to pry into ſuch foul and rotten carcaſſes as theſe are, too narrowly, or to make any ſubtile anatomy of them; but rather inquire a little into the original and immediate cauſes of them; becauſe perhaps they may be nearer of kin than we ordinarily are aware of, while we ſee their complexions to be ſo vaſtly different the one from the other.

And firſt of all, for SUPERSTITION (to lay aſide our vulgar notion of it, which much miſtakes it) * ; it imports *an over-timorous and dreadful apprehenſion of the Deity*;

* It is the ſame with that temper of mind which the Greeks call Δεισιδαιμονία, for ſo *Tully* frequently tranſlates that word, tho' not ſo fitly and emphatically as he hath done ſome others.

*Deity* * : and therefore the true cauſe and riſe of ſuperſtition is indeed nothing elſe but a falſe opinion of the Deity, that renders him dreadful and terrible, as being rigorous and imperious; that which repreſents him as auſtere and apt to be angry, but yet impotent, and eaſy to be appeaſed again by ſome flattering devotions, eſpecially if performed with ſanctimonious ſhews, and a formal ſadneſs of mind. And I wiſh that that picture of God, which ſome Chriſtians have drawn of him, wherein fourneſs and arbitrarineſs appear ſo much, doth not too much reſemble it. According to this ſenſe, *Plutarch* hath well defined it †, *a ſtrong paſſionate opinion, and ſuch a ſuppoſition as is productive of a fear debaſing and terrifying a man with the repreſentation of the gods as grievous and hurtful to mankind.*

Such men as theſe converſe not with the goodneſs of God, and therefore they are apt to attribute their impotent paſſions and peeviſhneſs of ſpirit to him. Or it may be becauſe ſome ſecret advertiſements of their conſciences tell them how unlike they themſelves are to God, and how they have provoked him; they are apt to be as much diſpleaſed with him as too troubleſome to them, as they think he is diſpleaſed with them. They are apt to account this divine ſupremacy as but a piece of tyranny which, by its ſovereign will, makes too great encroachments upon their liberties, and that which will eat up all their right and property; and therefore are ſlaviſhly afraid of him, *fearing Heaven's monarchy as a ſevere and churliſh tyranny, from which they cannot abſolve themſelves*, as the ſame author ſpeaks ‡: and therefore

* And therefore with *Heſychius* Δεισιδαιμονία and φοβοθεία are all one, and Δεισιδαίμων is by him expounded ὁ ἀδωλολάτρης, ὁ εὐσεβὴς, καὶ δειλὸς παρὰ θεοῖς, *an idolater, and alſo one that is very prompt to worſhip the gods, but withal fearful of them.* The word Εὐσεβὴς muſt here ſignify *a worſhipper of the gods in general*; if indeed it be not corrupted, and to be read Εὐλαβὴς, a word which ſome other Lexicographers uſe in this caſe.

† In his book περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας, in this manner, δόξαν ἐμπαθῆ καὶ δέος ποικίλην ὑπόληψιν ὕσαν ἐκλαπεινῶντος καὶ συντρίβοντος τὸν ἄνθρωπον, οἰόμενον τ' εἶναι θεὺς, εἶναι δε λυπηρὺς καὶ βλαβερὺς.

‡ Τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἀρχὴν ὡς τυραννίδα φοβούμενοι σκυθρωπὴν καὶ ἀπαραίτητον.

fore he thus diſcloſeth the private whiſperings of their minds. *The broad gates of hell are opened, the rivers of fire and Stygian inundations run down as a ſwelling flood, there is thick darkneſs crowded together, dreadful and ghaſtly ſights of ghoſts ſcreeching and howling, judges and tormentors, deep gulfs and abyſſes full of infinite miſeries* *. The Prophet *Eſay* gives us this epitome of their thoughts. *The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the hypocrites: who ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Iſa. xxxiii. 14. Though I ſhould not diſlike theſe dreadful and aſtoniſhing thoughts of future torment, which I doubt even good men may have cauſe to preſs home upon their own ſpirits, while they find ingenuity leſs active, the more to reſtrain ſin; yet I think it little commends God, and as little benefits us, to draw all this horror and aſtoniſhment from the contemplations of a Deity, which ſhould always be the moſt ſerene and lovely: our apprehenſions of the Deity ſhould be ſuch as might enoble our ſpirits, and not debaſe them. A right knowledge of God would beget a freedom and liberty of ſoul within us, and not ſervility; our thoughts of a Deity ſhould breed in us hopes of virtue, and not gender to a ſpirit of bondage †.

But that we may paſs on. Becauſe this unnatural reſemblance of God as an angry Deity in impure minds, ſhould it blaze too furiouſly, like the baſiliſk, would kill with its looks; therefore theſe painters uſe their beſt arts a little to ſoften, and render it leſs unpleaſing. And they who fancy God to be moſt haſty and apt to be diſpleaſed, yet are ready alſo to imagine him ſo impotently mutable, that his favour may be won again with their uncouth devotions, that he will be taken with their formal praiſes, and being thirſty after glory and praiſe and ſolemn addreſſes, may, by their



* ᾅδου τινὲς ἀνοίγονται πύλαι βαθεῖαι, καὶ ποταμοὶ πυρὸς ὁμοῦ καὶ γυγὸς ἀπορῥῶγες ἀναπετάννυνται, καὶ σκότος ἐφήπλωται πολυφάνταστον, εἰδώλων τινῶν χαλεπὰς μὲν ὄψεις, ὀικτρὰς δὲ φωνὰς ἐπιφερόντων, δικασταὶ δὲ καὶ κολασταὶ, καὶ χάσματα καὶ μυχοὶ, κακῶν μυρίων γέμοντες. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 167.

† ἀρετῆς γὰρ ἐλπὶς ὁ Θεός ἐστιν, ἡ δουλείας πρόφασις, as *Plutarch* hath well obſerved.

pompous furniſhing out all theſe for him, be won to a good liking of them *. And therefore ſuperſtition will always abound in theſe things whereby this deity of their own, made after the ſimilitude of men, may be moſt gratified, ſlaviſhly crouching to it. We will take a view of it in the words of *Plutarch*, though what refers to the Jews, if it reſpects more their rites than their manners, may ſeem to contain too haſty a cenſure of them. Superſtition brings in *wallowings in the duſt, tumblings in the mire, obſervations of ſabbaths, proſternations, uncouth geſtures, and ſtrange rites of worſhip* †. Superſtition is very apt to think that heaven may be bribed with ſuch falſe-hearted devotions; as *Porphyry* hath well explained it by this, that it is *an apprehenſion that a man may corrupt and bribe the Deity* ‡: which (as he there obſerves) was the cauſe of all thoſe bloody ſacrifices, and of ſome inhuman ones among the heathen, men imagining *that ſin is expiated by ſacrifice* ‖; like him in the prophet, that thought, by the fruit of his body and the firſtlings of his flock, to expiate the ſin of his ſoul, *Micah* vi. 7.

But it may be we may ſeem all this while to have made too tragical a deſcription of ſuperſtition; and indeed our author, to whom we have all this while had recourſe, ſeems to have ſet it forth, as anciently painters were wont to do thoſe pieces in which they would demonſtrate moſt their own ſkill; they would not content themſelves with the ſhape of one body only, but borrowed ſeveral parts from ſeveral bodies as might moſt fit their deſign and fill up the picture as that they deſired chiefly to repreſent. Superſtition, as may be, looks not ſo foul and deformed in every ſoul that is dyed with it, as he hath there ſet it forth, nor doth it every where ſpread itſelf alike: this affection

* And thus they repreſent him to themſelves, as *Lucian* in his *De Sacrificiis* ſpeaks too truly, tho' it may be too prophanely: ὡς κολακευόμενον ἥδεσθαι, ϗ ἀγαναχτῶν ἀμελύμενον.

† πηλώσεις, καταβορβορώσεις, σαββατισμὺς, ῥίψεις ἐπὶ πρόσωπον, αἰσχρὰς προκαθίσεις, ἀλλοκότους προσκυνήσεις.

‡ ὑπόληψις τῦ δεκάζειν δύνασθαι τὸ θῖον. lib. 2. περὶ ἀποχῆς.

‖ διὰ τῶν θυσιῶν ἐξωνεῖσθαι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

that ſhrouds itſelf under the name of religion, will variouſly diſcover itſelf as it is ſeated in minds of a various temper, and meets with variety of matter to exerciſe itſelf about.

We ſhall therefore a little further inquire into it, and what the judgments of the ſobereſt men anciently were of it; the rather for that a learned author of our own ſeems unwilling to acknowledge that notion of it for which we have hitherto out of *Plutarch* and others contended; who, tho' he hath freed it from that gloſs which the late ages have put upon it, yet he may ſeem to have too ſtrictly confined it to a cowardly worſhip of the ancient Gentile Dæmons, as if Superſtition and Polytheiſm were indeed the ſame thing, whereas Polytheiſm or Dæmon-worſhip is but one branch of it*. And in this ſenſe it was truly obſerved by *Petronius Arbiter*, that the whole progeny of the ancient Dæmons, at leaſt, in the minds of the vulgar, ſprung out of fear, and were ſupported by it †: tho' notwithſtanding, this fear, when in a being void of all true ſenſe of divine goodneſs, hath not eſcaped the cenſure of ſuperſtition in *Varro*'s judgment, whoſe maxim it was, as St. *Auſtin* tells us, *That the Divinity is revered by the religious and dreaded by the ſuperſtitious* ‡.

But that we may the more fully unfold the nature of this temper, and the effects of it, which are not always of one ſort, we ſhall firſt premiſe ſomething concerning the riſe of it.



* This was partly obſerved by the learned *Caſaubon* in his notes upon that chapter of *Theophraſtus* περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας. where it is deſcribed to be δειλία πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον, which he thus interprets, *Theophraſtus voce* δαιμόνιον *& Deos & Dæmones complexus eſt, & aliquid divinitatis eſſe particeps maleſana putavit antiquitas.*

† *Primus in orbe Deos fecit Timor.*

‡ *Deum à religioſo vereri, à ſuperſtitioſo timeri*: which diſtinction *Servius* ſeems to have made uſe of in his comment upon *Virgil*, Æneid. 6. where the poet deſcribing the torments of the wicked in hell, he runs out into an allegorical expoſition of all, it may be too much in favour of *Lucretius* whom he there magnifies. His words are theſe, *Ipſe etiam Lucretius dicit per eos ſuper quos jam-jam caſurus imminet lapis,* ſuperſtitioſos *ſignificari, qui inaniter ſemper verentur, & de Diis & Cœlo & locis ſuperioribus male opinantur*; *nam* Religioſi *ſunt qui per reverentiam timent.*

The common notions of a Deity, ſtrongly rooted in the ſouls of men, and meeting with the apprehenſions of guiltineſs, are very apt to excite this ſervile fear: and when men love their own filthy luſts, that they may ſpare them, they are preſently apt to contrive ſome other ways of appeaſing the Deity and compounding with him. Unhallowed minds that have no inward foundations of true holineſs to fix themſelves upon, are eaſily ſhaken and toſſed from all inward peace and tranquillity: and as the thoughts of ſome ſupreme power above them ſeize upon them, ſo they are ſtruck with the lightning thereof into inward affrightments; which are further increaſed by a vulgar obſervation of thoſe ſtrange, ſtupenduous and terrifying effects in nature, whereof they can give no certain reaſon, as earthquakes, thunderings and lightnings, blazing comets and other meteors of like nature, which are apt to terrify thoſe eſpecially who are already unſettled and diſturbed with an inward ſenſe of guilt *.

And though as the events in nature began ſometimes to be found out better by a diſcovery of their immediate natural cauſes, ſo ſome particular pieces of ſuperſtitious cuſtoms were antiquated and grown out of date, (as is well obſerved concerning thoſe charms anciently in uſe upon the appearing of an eclipſe, and ſome others) yet often affrights and horrors were not ſo eaſily abated, while they were unacquainted with the Deity, and with other myſterious events in nature, which begot thoſe furies and unlucky goblins †, in the

* as *Seneca* ſpeaks, *inevitabilem metum, ut ſupra nos aliquid timeremus, incutiunt.* *Petronius Arbiter* hath well deſcribed this buſineſs for us,

*Primus in orbe Deos fecit Timor, ardua cælo*
*Fulmina cum caderent, diſcuſſaque mœnia flammis,*
*Atque ictus flagraret Athos*———

From hence it was that the *Libri fulgurales* of the *Romans*, and other ſuch like volumes of ſuperſtition, ſwelled ſo much, and that the *pulvinaria Deorum* were ſo often frequented, as will eaſily appear to any one a little converſant in *Livy*, who every where ſets forth this devotion ſo largely, as if he himſelf had been too paſſionately in love with it.

† ἀλάστορας ϗ πάλαμναίους δαίμονας.

the weak minds of men. To all which we may add the frequent ſpectres and frightful apparitions of ghoſts, all which extorted ſuch a kind of worſhip from them as was moſt correſpondent to ſuch cauſes of it. And thoſe rites and ceremonies which were begotten by ſuperſtition, were again the unhappy nurſes of it, ſuch as are well deſcribed by *Plutarch*, *Feaſts and ſacrifices, as likewiſe obſervations of unlucky and fatal days, celebrated with eating of raw things, lacerations, faſtings, and howlings, and many times filthy ſpeeches in their ſacred rites, and frantic behaviour* *.

But as we inſinuated before, This root of ſuperſtition diverſly branched forth itſelf, ſometimes into magick and exorciſms, other times into pedantical rites and idle obſervations of things and ſeaſons, as *Theophraſtus* hath largely ſet them forth in his tract *concerning Superſtition:* in others it diſplayed itſelf in inventing as many new deities as there were ſeveral cauſes from whence their affrights proceeded, and finding out many *terrifying myſteries* † appropriate to them, as ſuppoſing they ought to be worſhipped with a kind of ſacred horror. Hence it is that we hear of the inhumane and diabolical ſacrifices called *human ſacrifices*, frequent among the old heathens ‡, and of thoſe dead mens bones which our Eccleſiaſtic writers tell us were found in their temples at the demoliſhing of them. Sometimes it would expreſs itſelf in a prodigal way of ſacrificing ‖;



* Ἑορταὶ καὶ θυσίαι, ὥσπερ ἡμέραι ἀποφράδες, καὶ σκυθρωπαὶ, ἐν αἷς ὠμοφαγίαι, καὶ διασπασμοὶ, νηστεῖαί τε καὶ κοπετοὶ, πολλαχοῦ δὲ παλλακίδες αἰσχρολογίαι πρὸς ἱερεῖς μανίαι τε, &c. *Plutarch, De orac. Defect.* tom. 2. p. 417.

† φρικταμυστήρια.

‡ As among many others *Porphyry*, in his treatiſe *De abſtinentia*, hath abundantly related.

‖ For which *Ammianus Marcellinus*, an heathen writer, but yet one who ſeems to have been well pleaſed with the ſimplicity and integrity of chriſtian religion, taxeth *Julian* the Emperor for ſuperſtition. *Julianus, ſuperſtitioſus magis quam legitimus ſacrorum obſervator, innumeras ſine parſimonia pecudes mactans, ut eſtimaretur, ſi reverteſſet de Parthis, boves jam defuturos:* like that *Marcus Cæſar*, of whom he relates this common proverb,

οἱ βόες οἱ λευκοὶ Μάρκῳ τῷ Καίσαρι χαίρειν,
ἂν σὺ γε νικήσῃς, ἡμεῖς ἀπωλόμεθα.

Beſides may other ways might be named, wherein ſuperſtition occaſionally diſplayed itſelf.

All which may beſt be underſtood, if we conſider it a little in that compoſition of fear and flattery which before we intimated: and indeed flattery is moſt incident to baſe and ſlaviſh minds; and where the fear and jealouſy of a Deity diſquiet a wanton dalliance with ſin, and diſturb the filthy pleaſure of vice, there this fawning and crouching diſpoſition will find out devices to quiet an angry conſcience within, and an offended God without, (tho' as men grow more expert in this cunning, theſe fears may in ſome degree abate.) This the antient philoſophy hath well remarked; and therefore properly defined ſuperſtition by *fawning ſervility* *, and uſeth theſe terms promiſcuouſly. Thus *Maximius Tyrius* ſpeaks †. *The pious man is God's friend, the ſuperſtitious is a flatterer of God: and indeed moſt happy and bleſſed is the condition of the pious man, God's friend; but right miſerable and ſad is the ſtate of the ſuperſtitious. The pious man, emboldened by a good conſcience, and encouraged by the ſenſe of his integrity, comes to God without fear and dread: but the ſuperſtitious being ſunk and depreſſed thro' the ſenſe of his own wickedneſs, comes not without much fear, being void of all hope and confidence, and dreading the gods as ſo many tyrants.* Thus *Plato* alſo ſets forth this ſuperſtitious temper; where he diſtinguiſheth three kinds of tempers in reference to the Deity, which are, *total atheiſm*, which he ſays never abides with any man till his old age; and *partial atheiſm*, which is a negation of providence; and a third, which is a perſuaſion concerning the gods, *that they are eaſily won by ſacrifices and prayers*, which he afterwards explains thus; *that*

* δεισιδαιμονία, κολακεία.

† ὁ μὲν εὐσεβὴς, φίλος θεῷ, ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων, κόλαξ θεοῦ· ὁ μακάριος ὁ εὐσεβὴς, ὁ φίλος θεῷ, δυσυχὴς δὲ ὁ δεισιδαίμων. ὁ μὲν θαρσῶν τῇ ἀρετῇ, προσεισι τοῖς θεοῖς ἄνευ δέους; ὁ δὲ ταπεινὸς διὰ μοχθηρίαν, μετὰ πολλοῦ δέους, δύσελπις, καὶ δεδιὼς τοὺς θεοὺς ὥστερ τοὺς τυράννους, in his *Diſſert.* 4. *concerning the difference between a friend and a flatterer.*

*that with gifts unjust men may find acceptance with them* *. And to this discourse of *Plato*, upon these three kinds of irreligious tempers, *Simplicius* seems to have respect, where he treats about right opinions in religion; and, having pursued the two former of them, he thus states the latter, which he calls *an atheistical opinion*, as well as the other two, being a conceit *that the gods might be appeased by gifts and worthless offerings* †; such men making account by their devotions, to draw the Deity to themselves, and winning the favour of Heaven, to procure such an indulgence to their lusts as no sober man on earth would give them; they in the mean while not considering that repentance, supplications and prayers, ought to draw us nearer to God, not God nearer to us; as in a ship, by fastening a cable to a firm rock, we intend not to draw the rock to the ship, but the ship to the rock. Which passage of *Simplicius* is therefore the more worthy of observation, shewing of how large an extent this irreligious temper is, and of how subtile a nature. This fond and gross dealing with the Deity was that which made the scoffing *Lucian* so much sport, who, in his treatise *of sacrifices*, tells a number of stories how the dæmons loved to be feasted, and where and how they were entertained, with such devotions, which are rather used magically as charms and spells for such as use them, to defend themselves against those evils which their own fears are apt perpetually to muster up, and to endeavour by bribery to purchase the favour and indulgence of Heaven ‡.

And yet all this while I would not be understood to condemn too severely all servile fear of God, if it tend to make

* ὅτι εὐπαραμύθητοι εἰσι θύμασι καὶ εὐχαῖς, and ὅτι παραίτητοί εἰσι τοῖσιν ἀδικοῦσιν, δεχόμενοι δῶρα, lib. 10. *De legibus*.

† θεοὺς παρατρέπεσθαι δώροις, καὶ ἀναθήμασι, καὶ κερματίου διαδόσεσιν, in *Epictet*. c. 38. p. 246.

‡ As *Juvenal* speaks of the superstitious *Egyptian*, Sat. 6.

*Illius lacrymæ mentitaque munera præstant,*
*Ut veniam culpæ non abnuat, ansere magno*
*Scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris.*

make men avoid true wickedneſs, but that which ſettles upon theſe lees of formality.

To conclude, were I to define ſuperſtition more generally according to the antient ſenſe of it, I would call it, "Such an apprehenſion of God in the thoughts of "men, as renders him grievous and burdenſome to "them, and ſo deſtroys all free and chearful converſe "with him; begetting in the ſtead thereof a forced "devotion, void of inward life and love." It is that which diſcovers itſelf pedantically in the worſhip of the Deity, in any thing that makes up but only the body or outward veſture of religion; tho' there it may make a mighty bluſter: and becauſe it comprehends not the true divine good that ariſeth to the ſouls of men from an internal frame of religion, it is therefore apt to think that all it's inſipid devotions are as ſo many preſents offered to the Deity and gratifications of him. How variouſly ſuperſtition can diſcover and manifeſt itſelf, we have intimated before: to which I ſhall only add this, That we are not ſo well rid of ſuperſtition, as ſome imagine, when they have expelled it out of their churches, expunged it out of their books and writings, or caſt it out of their tongues, by making innovations in names*; No, for all this, ſuperſtition may enter into our chambers, and creep into our cloſets, it may twine about our ſecret devotions, and actuate our forms of belief and orthodox opinions, when it hath no place elſe to ſhroud itſelf, or hide its head in; we may think to flatter the Deity by theſe, and to bribe him with them, when we are grown weary of more pompous ſolemnities: nay, it may mix itſelf with a ſeeming faith in Chriſt; as I doubt it doth now in too many, who laying aſide all ſober and ſerious care of true piety, think it ſufficient to offer up the active and paſſive righteouſneſs of their Saviour to a ſevere and rigid juſtice, to make expiation for thoſe ſins in the commiſſion of which they can be willing to allow themſelves.

A

* Wherein they ſometimes imitate thoſe old *Caunii* that *Herodotus* ſpeaks of, who, that they might baniſh all the foreign gods that had ſtollen in among them, took their proceſſion thro' all their country, beating and ſcourging the air along as they went.

A

# DISCOURSE

OF

# ATHEISM.

JOB. xxi. 14, 15.

*They ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.*

*What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? and what Profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him?*

A

# DISCOURSE

OF

# ATHEISM.

WE have now done with what we intended concerning ſuperſtition, and ſhall a little conſider and ſearch into the pedigree of ATHEISM, which indeed hath ſo much affinity with ſuperſtition, that it may ſeem to have the ſame father with it *. *Superſtition could be well ſatisfied that there were no God to trouble or diſquiet it, and atheiſm thinks there is none* †. And as ſuperſtition is engendred by a baſe opinion of the Deity as cruel and tyrannical (tho' it be afterwards brooded on and hatch'd by a ſlaviſh fear and abject thoughts) ſo alſo is atheiſm: and that auſtere and ghaſtly apprehenſion of God, when it meets with more ſtout and ſurly natures, is apt to enrage them, and cankering them with malice againſt the Deity whom they ſo little brook, provokes them to fight againſt it and undermine the notion of it †. *The ſuperſtitious man wiſhes to be*

* Οὐκ οἴεσθαι θεὸς εἶναι ὁ ἄθεος, ὁ δὲ δεισιδαίμων ὃ βούλεται. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 170.

† Ὁ δεισιδαίμων τῇ προαιρήσει ἄθεος ὤν, ἀσθενέστερός ἐστιν ἢ τὸ δοξάζειν περὶ θεῶν ὃ βούλεται. *Plutarch*, ibid.

*be an atheiſt, yet cannot, by reaſon of his weakneſs, judge concerning the gods as he would wiſh.* If theſe melancholic opinions and diſquieting fears of the Deity mould not the minds of men into devotion, as finding them too untameable to receive any ſuch impreſſions; they are then apt to exaſperate men againſt it, and fit them up to contend with that Being which they cannot bear, and to deſtroy that which would deprive them of their own liberty. Theſe unreaſonable fears of a Deity will always be moving into flattery or wrath. Atheiſm could never have ſo eaſily crept into the world, had not ſuperſtition made way and opened a back-door for it; it could not ſo eaſily have baniſhed the belief of a Deity, had not that firſt accuſed and condemned it as deſtructive to the peace of mankind; and therefore it hath always juſtified and defended itſelf by ſuperſtition: as *Plutarch* hath well expreſſed it, *Superſtition hath afforded a being to atheiſm, and afterwards furniſhed it with an apology, which, tho' it be neither true nor lovely, yet wants it not a ſpecious pretence* *. And therefore *Simplicius* (as we heard before) declares the notion of ſuperſtition to partake of atheiſm, ſeeing (as he gives an account of it) it diſrobes the Deity of true majeſty and perfection, and repreſents it as weak and infirm, clothed with ſuch fond, feeble and impotent paſſions as are in men themſelves. And *Dionyſius Longinus*, that noble rhetorician, fears not to challenge *Homer* as atheiſtical, for his unſavoury language of the gods, which indeed was only the offspring of his ſuperſtition. If the ſuperſtitious man thinks that God is altogether like himſelf (which indeed is a character moſt proper to ſuch) the Atheiſt will ſoon ſay in his heart, *There is no God*; and will judge it, not without ſome appearance of reaſon, to be better that there were none; as *Plutarch* hath diſcourſed

* ἡ δὲ δεισιδαιμονία τῇ ἀθεότητι δι' γενέσθαι παρίσχεν ἀρχήν, δι' γενομένη δίδοσιν ἀπολογίαν, οὐκ ἀληθῆ μὲν οὐδὲ καλήν, προφάσεως δέ τινος οὐκ ἄμοιρον οὖσαν. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 171.

diſcourſed it, *Were it not better for the* Gauls *and* Scythians, *not to have had any notion, fancy or hiſtory of the Gods, than to think them ſuch as delighted in the blood of men offered up in ſacrifices upon their altars, as reckoning this the moſt perfect kind of ſacrifice and conſummate devotion**? For thus his words are to be tranſlated in reference to thoſe antient *Gauls* and *Scythians*, whom almoſt all hiſtories teſtify to have been ſacrificers of men. Which horrid and monſtrous ſuperſtition was antiently very frequent among the heathen †.

This made *Lucretius* cry out with ſo much indignation, when he took notice of *Agamemnon*'s diabolical devotion in ſacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* to make expiation at his *Trojan* expedition, ‡ *ſuch deviliſh acts religion could perſuade.* And indeed what ſober man could endure to be thought ſuch an one, as God himſelf was reputed to be by this blind ſuperſtition? a ſuperſtition which overſpread the heathen world, and I doubt, is not ſufficiently rooted out from among chriſtians; this it was which made *Plutarch* ſo much in defiance of it, cry out, as willing almoſt to be an atheiſt rather than to entertain the vulgar ſuperſtition, *As for me, I had rather men ſhould ſay that there neither was nor is ſuch a man as* Plutarch, *than to ſay that he is or was an inconſiſtent fickle man, apt to be angry, and for every trifle revengeful* ‖, &c. as he goes on farther to expreſs this blaſphemy of ſuperſtition.

But it may not be amiſs, to learn from Atheiſts themſelves what was the impulſive cauſe that moved them to



* ὃν ἄμεινον ἦν Γαλάταις ἐκείνοις καὶ Σκύθαις τοιαῦτα μήτε νοσεῖν ἔχειν θεῶν, μήτε φαντασίαν, μήτε ἱστορίαν. ἢ θεὺς εἶναι νομίζειν χαίροντας ἀνθρώπων σφαττομένων αἵμασι, καὶ τελειοτάτην θυσίαν καὶ ἱερουργίαν ταύτην νομίζοντας. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 171.

† It was ſharply taxed by *Empedocles* of old.

Μορφὴν δ' ἀλλάξαντα πατὴρ φίλον υἱὸν ἀείρας
Σφάζει, ἐπευχόμενος μέγα νήπιος.

‡ *Tantum religio potuit ſuadere malorum.*

‖ ἐγὼ γοῦν ἂν ἐθέλοιμι μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους λέγειν περὶ ἐμοῦ μήτε γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν μηδὲ εἶναι Πλούταρχον, ἢ λέγειν ὅτι Πλούταρχός ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ἀσεβαίος, εὐμετάβολος, εὐχερὴς πρὸς ὀργήν, ἐπὶ τοῖς τυχοῦσι τιμωρητικός. *Plutarch* tom. 2. p. 169.

baniſh away all thoughts and ſober fear of a Deity, what was the principle upon which this black opinion was built, and by which it was ſuſtained. And this we may have from the confeſſions of the *Epicureans*, who tho' they ſeemed to acknowledge a Deity, yet I doubt not but thoſe who ſearch into their writings will ſoon embrace *Cicero*'s cenſure of them, *In words they aſſert the exiſtence of the Gods, in effect they deny it* *. Indeed it was not ſafe for *Epicurus* (tho' he was much inclined to let the world know how little he cared for their deities) to profeſs he believed there were none, leſt he ſhould have met with the ſame entertainment for it that *Protagoras* did at *Athens*, who for declaring himſelf doubtful *whether there were gods or not* †, was himſelf put to death, and his books burnt in the ſtreets of *Athens*, after public proclamation ‡. And indeed the world was never ſo degenerated any where, as to ſuffer atheiſm to appear in public view.

But that we may return, and take the confeſſions a little of theſe ſecret atheiſts of the *Epicurean* ſect: and of theſe *Cicero* gives us a large account in his books *de Finibus*, and other parts of his philoſophy. *Torquatus* the *Epicurean*, in his firſt book *de Finibus*, liberally ſpends his breath to cool that too much heat of religion, as he thought, in thoſe that could not apprehend God as any other than *a divinity inquiſitive and much occupied* ‖; and ſo he ſtates this maxim of the religion that then was moſt in uſe, *He who is tinctured with ſuperſtition, can never enjoy tranquillity* §. By the way, it may be worth our obſerving, how this monſtrous progeny of men, when they would ſeem to acknowledge a Deity, could not forget their own beloved image which was always

* *Verbis quidem ponunt, reipſa tollunt deos.*

† εἴτε εἰσι, εἴτε μὴ εἰσι θεοὶ.

‡ ὑπὸ κήρυκα *ſub voce præconis*, as *Diogenes Laertius* and others record.

‖ *Curioſum & plenum negotii Deum*, as one of that Sect doth phraſe it, *Lib.* 1. *de Nat. decor.*

§ *Superſtitione qui eſt imbutus, quietus eſſe nunquam poteſt.*

ways before their eyes; and therefore they would have
as careleſs of any thing but its own pleaſure and idle
life as they themſelves were: ſo eaſy is it for all ſects,
ſome way or other to ſlide into a compliance with theſe
perſons who affirmed God to be of humane ſhape, and
to bring down the Deity to a conformity to their own
image.

But we ſhall rather chuſe a little to examine *Lucretius* in this point, who hath, in the name of all his ſect, largely told us the riſe and original of this deſign. After a ſhort introduction to his following diſcourſe of nature, he thus begins his prologue in commendation of *Epicurus* his exploit, as he fancies it.

*Long time men lay oppreſſed with ſlaviſh fear,*
*Religion's tyranny did domineer,*
*And being placed in heaven, looked proudly down,*
*And frighted abject ſpirits with her frown.*
*At length a mighty man of Greece began*
*T'aſſert the natural liberty of man,*
*By ſenſeleſs terrors, and vain fancies led*
*To ſlavery, ſtrait the conquered fantom fled;*
*Not the famed ſtories of the Deity,*
*Not all the thunder of the threatning ſky*
*Could ſtop his riſing ſoul* *:

And a little after in a ſorry ovation, proudly cries out,

*Thus by his conqueſt we our right regain,*
*Religion he ſubdued, and we now reign* †.



* *Humana ante oculos fœdè cùm vita jaceret,*
*In terris oppreſſa gravi ſub religione,*
*Quæ caput è cœli regionibus oſtendebat*
*Horribili aſpectu ſemper mortalibus inſtans;*
*Primùm Graius homo mortales tendere contra*
*Eſt oculos auſus, primuſque obſiſtere contra:*
*Quem nec fama Deûm, nec fulmina, nec minitanti*
*Murmure compreſſit cœlum———*

† *Quare religio pedibus ſubjecta viciſſim*
*Obteritur; nos exæquat victoria cœlo.*

But to proceed; our author obſerving the timorous minds of men to have been ſtruck with this dreadful ſuperſtition from the obſervation of ſome ſtupendous effects and events (as he chuſeth rather to call them) in nature; he therefore, following herein the ſteps of his great maſter *Epicurus*, undertakes ſo to ſolve all thoſe knots into which ſuperſtition was tied up, by unfolding the ſecrets of nature, as that men might find themſelves looſened from thoſe cruel maſters and tyrants, as he calls the vulgar notions of the Deity. And ſo begins with a ſimple confutation of the opinion of the creation, which he ſuppoſed to contain a ſure and ſenſible demonſtration of a Deity, and to have ſprung up from an admiring ignorance of natural productions.

*From hence proceeds all our diſtruſt and fear;*
*That many things in heaven and earth appear,*
*Whoſe cauſes far remote and hidden ly,*
*Beyond the ken of vulgar reaſon's eye,*
*And therefore men aſcribe them to the Deity* *.

And towards the end of this firſt book,

*For firſt, I teach great things in lofty ſtrains,*
*And looſe men from religion's grievous chains* †:

But herein all the *Epicureans* (who are not the true, but the foſter-fathers of that natural philoſophy, whereof they boaſt, and of which indeed *Democritus* was the firſt author) do miſerably blunder themſelves. For tho' a lawful acquaintance with all the events and *phænomena* which ſhew themſelves upon this mundane ſtage,

* *Quippe ità formido mortales continet omnes,*
*Quòd multa in terris fieri cœlòque tuentur,*
*Quorum operum cauſas nullâ ratione videre*
*Poſſunt, ac fieri divino numine rentur.* Lib. 1.
† *Primùm quòd magnis doceo de rebus, & arctis*
*Religionum animos nodis exſolvere pergo.*

ſtage, would contribute much to free mens minds from the ſlavery of dull ſuperſtition: yet would it alſo breed a ſober and amiable belief of the Deity, as it did in all the *Pythagoreans*, *Platoniſts*, and other ſects of philoſophers, if we may believe themſelves; and an ingenuous knowledge hereof would be as fertile with religion, as the ignorance thereof in affrighted and baſe minds is with ſuperſtition.

For which purpoſe I ſhall need only to touch upon the maſter-notion of *Epicurus*, by which he undertakes to ſolve all difficulties that might hold our thoughts in ſuſpenſe about a Creator, which is the *plenum* or *body* (which in his philoſophy is nothing but an infinity of inſenſible atoms moving to and fro in an empty ſpace) is, together with that *inane* or *ſpace* in which it is, ſufficient to beget all thoſe *phænomena* which we ſee in nature. Which, however it might be true, motion being once granted, yet herein *Tully* hath well ſtopt the career of this over-haſty philoſophy, *There are two things in nature to be ſearched after; the one, what that matter is out of which every thing is made, the other what is that energy which produces every thing: the Epicureans treat of matter, but inquire not into the efficient cauſe* *: Which is as much as if ſome conceited ſophiſter ſhould go about to prove that a piece of clock-work had no dependency upon the ſkill of an artificer, by deſcanting upon the ſeveral parts of it, without taking notice in the mean while of ſome external weight or ſpring that moves it: or, to uſe his own ſimilitude, as if one that undertakes to analyſe any learned book, ſhould tell us how ſo many letters meeting together in ſeveral combinations, ſhould beget all that ſenſe that is contained therein, without minding that wit which caſt them all into their ſeveral ranks. And this made *Ariſtotle*, otherwiſe not over-zealous of religion, ſoberly to acknowledge ſome *firſt mover*, *himſelf unmoveable* †.



* Lib. 1 *De finibus*, *Cum in rerum natura duo ſint quærenda, unum, quae materia ſit ex qua quæque res efficiatur; alterum, quae vis ſit quae quidque efficiat: de materia diſſeruerunt Epicurei; vim & cauſam efficiendi reliquerunt.*

† τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἀκίνητον.

And yet could we allow *Epicurus* this power of motion to be ſeated in nature, yet that he might perform the true taſk of a naturaliſt, he muſt alſo give us an account how ſuch a force and power in nature ſhould ſubſiſt: which indeed is eaſy to do, if we call in God himſelf as the architect and mover of this divine artifice *; but without ſome infinite power, impoſſible.

And we ſhould further inquire, how theſe moveable and rambling atoms come to place themſelves ſo orderly in the univerſe, and obſerve that abſolute harmony and decorum in all their motions, as if they kept time with the muſical laws of ſome almighty mind that compoſed all their leſſons, and meaſured out their dances up and down in the univerſe; and alſo how it comes to paſs, if they be only moved by chance and accident, that ſuch regular changes and generations ſhould be begotten by the fortuitous concourſe of atoms, of which they ſometimes ſpeak, they having no centre to ſeat themſelves about in an infinite void, as *Cicero* argues; and how theſe bodies that are once moved by ſome impulſe from their former ſtation, return again, or at leaſt come to ſtay themſelves, and do not rather move perpetually the ſame way the firſt impulſe and direction carried them; or why they do not there reſt where their motion firſt began to ceaſe, if they were interrupted by any thing without them: or again, if the proper motion of theſe atoms be always toward ſome centre, as *Epicurus* ſometimes is pleaſed to ſtate the matter, *in direct lines*, as he ſaith, then how comes there, as *Tully* replies, to be any generation? or if there be a declining motion joined with this motion of gravity (which was one of the peculiar tenets of *Epicurus*, and not borrowed from *Democritus*) then why ſhould not all tend the ſame way? and ſo all thoſe motions, generations and appearances in nature all vaniſh, ſeeing all variety of motion would be taken away which way ſoever this unhallowed opinion be ſtated?

Thus we ſee, tho' we ſhould allow *Epicurus*'s principle and fundamental abſurdity in the frame of nature, yet it is too

* θεὸν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς.

too airy and weak a thing to ſupport that maſſy bulk of abſurdities which he would build upon it. But it was not the lot of any of his ſchool to be over-wiſe (however they did boaſt moſt in the title of *wiſe men*) as is well obſerved of them; for then they might have been ſo happy too as to have diſpelled theſe thick and filthy miſts of atheiſm, by thoſe bright beams of truth that ſhine in the frame of this inferior world, wherein, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *that which may be known of God is made manifeſt**. Rom. i. 19.

Atheiſm moſt commonly lurks in the confines between knowledge and ignorance; when the minds of men begin to draw thoſe groſs, earthly vapours of ſenſual and material ſpeculations by dark and cloudy diſputes, they are then moſt in danger of being benighted in them. There is a natural ſenſe of God that lodges in the minds of the loweſt and dulleſt ſort of vulgar men, which is always roving after him, catching at him, tho' it cannot lay any ſure hold on him; which works like a natural inſtinct antecedent to any mature knowledge, as being indeed the firſt principle of it†. But when contentious diſputes, and frothy reaſonings, and contemplations informed by fleſhly affections, converſant only about the out-ſide of nature, begin to riſe up in mens ſouls; they may then be in ſome danger of depreſſing all thoſe in-bred notions of a Deity, and to reaſon themſelves out of their own ſenſes, as the old *Sceptics* did: and therefore it might perhaps be wiſhed, that ſome men who have not religion, had had more ſuperſtition to accompany them in their paſſage from ignorance to knowledge.

But we have run out too far in this digreſſion: we ſhall now return, and obſerve how *Lucretius* takes notice of another piece of vulgar ſuperſtition, which he thinks fit to be chaſed away by atheiſm, and that is the *terrors of the world to come*, which he thus ſets upon in his third book,

*Next*

* τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

† If I were to ſpeak preciſely in the mode of the Stoicks, I would rather call it ὁρμὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν, than with *Plutarch* θεοῦ νόησιν.

*Next of the mind and of the ſoul I'll ſing,*
*And chaſe that dread of hell, thoſe idle fears*
*That ſpoil our lives with jealouſies and cares,*
*Diſturb our joys with dread of pains beneath,*
*And fully them with the black fear of death* *.

And afterwards he tells us how this fear of the gods thus proceeding from the former cauſes, and from thoſe ſpectres and gaſtly apparitions with which men were ſometimes terrified, begat all thoſe fantaſtic rites and ceremonies in uſe amongſt them, as their temples, ſacred lakes and pools, their groves, altars, images, and other like vanities, as ſo many idle toys capable of pleaſing theſe deities; and at laſt concludes himſelf thus into atheiſm, as a ſtrong fort to preſerve himſelf from theſe cruel deities whom ſuperſtition had made, becauſe he could not find the way to true religion,

*Now ſing, my muſe, for that's my next deſign,*
*Why all do bow to ſomewhat as divine?*
*Why every nation has its proper ſhrine?*
*Why all do temples build, why altars raiſe?*
*And why all ſacrifice on ſacred days?*
*How this diffuſed, this laſting fame was ſpread*
*Of powers above? whence came that awful dread,*
*That parent of religion thro' the rout,*
*Which forces them to bow, and grow devout?*
*This is an eaſy taſk* †:

Thus

* *Animi natura videtur*
*Atque animæ curanda meis jam verſibus eſſe,*
*Et metus ille foras præceps acheruntis agendus*
*Funditus, humanam vitam qui turbat ab imo,*
*Omnia ſuffundens mortis nigrore*

† *Nunc quæ cauſa Deûm per magnas numina gentes*
*Pervulgarit, & ararum compleverit urbes,*
*Suſcipiendaque curarit ſolennia ſacra,*
*Quæ nunc in magnis florent rebuſque lociſque;*
*Unde etiam nunc eſt mortalibus inſitus horror*
*Qui delubra Deûm nova toto ſuſcitat orbi*
*Terrarum, & feſtis cogit celebrare diebus;*
*Non ità difficile eſt rationem reddere verbis.* lib. 5.

Thus we ſee how ſuperſtition ſtrengthened the wicked hands of atheiſm; ſo far is a formal and ritual way of religion proceeding from baſeneſs and ſervility of mind (tho' ſupported by the utmoſt rigour and ſeverity) from weakening it. And I wiſh ſome of our opinions in religion in theſe days may not have the ſame evil influences as the notorious *Gentile-ſuperſtition* of old had, as well for the begetting this brat of atheiſm, as I doubt it is too manifeſt they have for ſome other.

Thus we ſhould now leave this argument; only before we paſs from it, we ſhall obſerve two things which *Plutarch* hath ſuggeſted to us. The firſt whereof is, that howſoever ſuperſtition be ſo very unlovely a thing, yet it is more tolerable than atheiſm: which I ſhall repeat in his words, *We ſhould endeavour to remove ſuperſtition from our minds, as a film from our eyes; but if that cannot be, we muſt not therefore pluck out our eyes, and blind the faith that generally we have of the Deity**. Superſtition may ſometimes keep men from the outward acts of ſin, and ſo their future puniſhment may have ſome abatement. Beſides that atheiſm offers the greateſt violence to mens ſouls that may be, pulling up the notions of a deity, which have ſpread their roots quite thro' all the powers of mens ſouls.

The *ſecond* is this, *That atheiſm itſelf is a moſt ignoble and uncomfortable thing*, as *Cicero* hath largely diſcuſſed it, and eſpecially *Plutarch* in his above named treatiſe, written by way of confutation of *Colotes* the *Epicurean*, who writ a book to prove that a man could not live quietly by following any other ſects of philoſophers beſides his own; as if all true good were only converſant *about the belly, and all the paſſages of the body* †, and the way to true happineſs, was *to render the whole man carnal*,

* Δεῖ μὲν ἀμέλει τὴς περὶ θεῶν δόξης, ὥσπερ ὄψεως λήμην, ἀφαιρᾶν τὴ δεισιδαιμονίαν· εἰ δ' τῦτο ἀδύνατον, μὴ συνεκκόπτειν, μηδὲ τυφλὴν τὴ πίσιν ἣν ὁι πλεῖσοι περὶ θεῶν ἔχυσι. Lib. Ὅτι ὐδὲ ζῆν ἐστιν ἡδέως κατ' Επίκυρον.

† περὶ γαστέρα, καὶ τὰς ἄλλας πόρυς τὴς σαρκὸς ἅπαντας. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 1087.

*nal, or elſe to pamper the ſoul, in a ſwine like manner with bodily pleaſures* *.

What is all that happineſs which ariſeth from theſe bodily pleaſures to any one that hath any high or noble ſenſe within him? This groſs, muddy, and ſtupid opinion is nothing elſe but *the diſgracing of humanity* †, which caſts as great a ſcorn and reproach upon the nature of mankind as may be, and ſinks it into the deepeſt abyſs of baſeneſs. And certainly, were the higheſt happineſs of mankind ſuch a thing as might be felt by a corporeal touch, were it of ſo ignoble a birth as to ſpring out of this earth, and to grow up out of this mire and clay; we might well ſit down, and bewail our unhappy fates, that we ſhould rather be born men than brute beaſts, which enjoy more of this world's happineſs than we can do, without any ſin or guilt. How little of pleaſure theſe ſhort lives taſte here, which only laſts ſo long as the indigency of nature is in ſupplying, and after that, only *a flying ſhadow, or flitting dream of that pleaſure*, (which is choaked as ſoon as craving nature is ſatisfied) *remains in the fancy as an incentive to bodily luſt* ‡.

And therefore *Epicurus*, ſeeing how ſlippery the ſoul was to all ſenſual pleaſure, which was apt to ſlide away perpetually from it, and again how little of it the body was capable of where it had a ſhorter ſtay; he and his followers could not well tell where to place this beggarly gueſt: and therefore, as *Plutarch* ſpeaks, *one while they would place it in the body, and then lead it back again into the ſoul, not knowing where to beſtow it* ‖. And *Diodorus*, and the philoſophers of the *Cyrenaic* ſect, and the *Epicureans*, as *Cicero* tells us, who all could fancy nothing but a bodily happineſs, yet could not agree whether

* Σαρκοτοιᾶν ἢ ἄνθρωπον ὅλον, or elſe ἢ ψυχὴν ταὶς τῦ σώματος ἡδοναῖς κατασυβωλῶν, as *Plutarch* hath not more wittily than judiciouſly replied upon him. *Plutarch.* tom. 2. p. 1096.

† *Deboneſtamentum humani generis.*

‡ σκία τις ὑπολέιπεται τῆς ἡδονῆς ὃ ὄναρ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, οἷον ὑπέκκαυμα τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν, as *Plutarch* hath well obſerved in the ſame diſcourſe. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 1089.

‖ ἄνω καὶ κάτω μεταίρονλες, ἐκ τῦ σώματος εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν, εἶτα πάλιν ἐκ ταύτης εἰς ἐκᾶνο. *Plutarch*, tom. 2. p. 1089.

whether it ſhould be *actual pleaſure*, or *abſence of pain*, or ſomething elſe; it being ever thought ſo hard a thing to define, like that baſe matter of which it is begotten, which, by reaſon of its penury and ſcantneſs of beings, as philoſophers tell us, doth eſcape our apprehenſions, and is nothing elſe but a ſhady kind of nothing, ſomething that hath a name and nothing more. I dare ſay that all who have any juſt eſteem of humanity, cannot but with a noble ſcorn diſdain ſuch a baſe-born happineſs as this is, produced only out of the ſlime of this earth: and yet this is all the portion of atheiſm, which teaches the entertainers of it to believe themſelves nothing elſe but ſo many heaps of more refined duſt, fortuitouſly gathered together, which at laſt muſt be all blown away again.

But a true belief of a Deity is a ſure ſupport to all ſerious minds, comforting them, not only with future hopes, but with an inward ſerenity while they ſojourn in this life. What the *Stoic* ſaid in his cool and mature thoughts, *it is not worth the while to live in a world empty of God and providence* *, is the ſenſe of all thoſe who know what a deity means. Indeed it were the greateſt unhappineſs that might be, to have been born into ſuch a world, where we ſhould be perpetually toſſed up and down by a rude and blind fortune, and be perpetually liable to all thoſe abuſes to which the ſavage luſts and paſſions of the world would expoſe us. It is not poſſible for any thing well to bear up the ſpirit of that man who calmly meditates with himſelf on the true ſtate and condition of this world, ſhould that mind and wiſdom be taken away from it which governs every part of it, and over-rules all thoſe diſorders that at any time begin to break forth in it. Were there not an omniſcient ſkill to temper, and fitly to rank in their due places all thoſe quarrelſome and extravagant ſpirits that are in the world, it would ſoon prove an unhabitable place, and ſink under the heavy weight of its own confuſion; which was aptly ſignified in that fable of *Phaeton*, who being admitted to drive the chariot of the ſun but for one

* οὐκ ἔστι ζῆν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν καὶ κενῷ προνοίας.

one day, by his rude and unſkilful guidance of it, made it fall down, and burn the world. Remove God and providence out of the world, and then we have nothing to depend upon but chance and fortune, the humours and paſſions of men; and he that could then live in it, had need be as blind as theſe lords would be, that he might not ſee his own miſery always ſtaring upon him; and had need be more ſenſeleſs and ſtupid, that he might not be affected with it.

A

# DISCOURSE

OF THE

# IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

A

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# IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

HAVING finiſhed our two ſhort diſcourſes concerncerning thoſe two *Anti-deities*, viz. *ſuperſtition* and *atheiſm*; we ſhall now proceed to diſcourſe more largely concerning the main heads and principles of religion.

And here we are to take notice of thoſe two cardinal points, which the author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* makes the neceſſary foundations of all religion, *viz. That God is*, and *That he is a rewarder of them that ſeek him*, Heb. xi. 6. To which we ſhould add, *The immortality of the reaſonable ſoul*; but that *that* may ſeem included in the former: and indeed we can neither believe any inviſible reward of which he there ſpeaks, without an anterior belief of the ſoul's immortality; when we entertain a ſerious belief of that, the notions of puniſhment and reward will naturally follow from it; we never meet with any who, being perſuaded of the former, ever doubted of the latter: and therefore the former two have been uſually taken alone for the firſt principles of religion, and have been moſt inſiſted upon by the *Platoniſts*; and accordingly a latter *Platoniſt*, writing a ſummary of *Plato*'s divinity, intitles his book,

*Of God and the Immortality of the ſoul.* And alſo the Stoical philoſophy requires a belief of theſe as the fundamental principles of all religion; of the one whereof *Epictetus* himſelf aſſures us, *Know that the main foundation of piety is this, to have right opinions and apprehenſions of God, that he is, and that he governs all things well and wiſely* *. And the other is ſufficiently inſinuated in their cardinal diſtinction of *the things within our power, and the things not within our power* †, and is more fully expreſſed by *Simplicius*. For, however the *Stoicks* may ſeem to lay ſome ground of ſuſpicion, as if they were dubious in this point, yet I think that which *Cicero* and others deliver concerning their opinion herein, may fully anſwer all ſcruples, *viz.* That, as they made certain viciſſitudes of conflagrations and inundations, whereby the world ſhould periſh in certain periods of time; ſo they thought the ſouls of men ſhould alſo be ſubject to theſe periodical revolutions; and therefore, tho' they were of themſelves immortal, ſhould, in theſe changes, fall under the power of the common fate.

And indeed we ſcarce ever find that any were deemed religious, who did not own theſe two fundamentals. For the *Sadducees*, the *Jewiſh* writers are wont commonly to reckon them among the *Epicureans*, becauſe, tho' they held a God, yet they denied the immortality of mens ſouls, which the New Teſtament ſeems to include, if not eſpecially to aim at, in imputing to them a denial of the reſurrection; which is therefore more fully explained in the *Acts*, where it is added, that they held there was *neither angel nor ſpirit*, chap. xxiii. 8. And theſe two principles are chiefly aimed at in thoſe two inſcriptions upon the temple at *Delphos*, the one, THOU ART, referring to God, by which title thoſe who came in to worſhip were ſuppoſed to invoke him, acknowledging his immutable and eternal nature; the other,

* Τὴς περὶ τὺς θεὺς ἐυσεβείας, ἴσθι ὅτι τὸ κυριώτατον ἐκεῖν ἔστιν ὀρθὰς ὑπολήψεις περὶ ἀυτῶν ἔχειν ὡς ὄντων, καὶ διοικούντων τὰ ὅλα καλῶς καὶ δικαίως. *Epictet. Enchirid.* c. 28.

† τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ τὰ μὴ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

other, KNOW THYSELF, as the admonition of the Deity again to all his worſhippers, to take notice of the dignity and immortality of their own ſouls*.

But, if we will have the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian religion, we muſt add to the former, *The communication of God to mankind thro' Chriſt*; of which laſt the ſcripture treats at large, ſo far as concerns our practice, with that plaineſs and ſimplicity, that I cannot but think, that whoſoever ſhall ingenuouſly and with humility of ſpirit addreſſing himſelf to God, converſe therewith, will ſee the bright beams of divinity ſhining forth in it, and it may be find the text itſelf much plainer than all thoſe gloſſes that have been put upon it; tho' perhaps it is not ſo clear in matters of ſpeculation, as ſome magiſterial men are apt to think it is.

Now, for theſe three articles of faith and practice, I think, if we duly conſider the Scriptures, or the reaſon of the thing itſelf, we ſhall eaſily find all practical religion to be referred to them, and built upon them: *The nature of God and of our immortal ſouls*, both ſhew us what our religion ſhould be, and alſo the neceſſity of it; and the doctrine of *free grace in Chriſt*, the ſweet and comfortable means of attaining to that perfection and bleſſedneſs at which the other belief teaches us to aim.

In purſuing of theſe, we ſhall begin with *The immortality of the ſoul*, which, if it be once cleared, we can neither leave any room for atheiſm (from which they, I doubt, are not ordinarily free who have groſs material notions of their own ſouls) nor be wholly ignorant what God is: for indeed the chief natural way whereby we can climb up to the underſtanding of the Deity, is by a contemplation of our own ſouls. We cannot think of him but according to the meaſure and model of our own intellect, or frame any other idea of him than what the impreſſions of our own ſouls will permit us: and therefore the beſt philoſophers have always taught us to inquire for God within ourſelves;



* ΕΙ, ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ, as *Plutarch* and *Cicero*, as alſo *Clemens Alexandrinus* expound them.

*reaſon in us*, as *Cicero* tells us, being *a reſemblance of the eternal reaſon* *: and accordingly ſome good expoſitors have interpreted that place in St. *John*'s goſpel, *He is that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world*, chap. i. 9. which if I were to gloſs upon in the language of the *Platoniſts*, I ſhould do it thus, *the Eternal Word is the light of ſouls* †. But we ſhall not ſearch into the full nature of the ſoul, but rather make our inquiry into the immortality of it, and endeavour to demonſtrate that.

## CHAP. II.

BEFORE we fall more cloſely upon this, *viz.* the demonſtrating the ſoul's immortality, we ſhall premiſe three things.

1. *That the immortality of the ſoul doth not abſolutely need any demonſtration in order to clear it, but might be aſſumed rather as a principle; ſeeing the notion of it is apt naturally to inſinuate itſelf into the belief of the moſt vulgar ſort of men.* Mens underſtandings commonly lead them as readily to believe that their ſouls are immortal, as that they have any exiſtence at all. And, tho' they be not all ſo wiſe and logical, as to diſtinguiſh aright between their ſouls and their bodies, or be able to tell what kind of thing that is which they commonly call their ſoul; yet they are ſtrongly inclined to believe that ſome part of them ſhall ſurvive another, and that *that* ſoul, which it may be they conceive by a groſs phantaſm, ſhall live, when the other moſt viſible part of them ſhall moulder into duſt. And therefore all nations have

* *Participata ſimilitudo rationis æternæ.*

† λόγος ἐστι φῶς ψυχῶν; to which the vulgar *Latin* reſers ed in Pſalm iv. 7. *Signatum eſt ſupra nos lumen vultus tui, Domine*, as *Aquinas* obſerves,

have conſented in this belief, which hath almoſt been as vulgarly received as the belief of a Deity; as a diligent converſe with hiſtory will aſſure us, it having been never ſo much queſtioned by the vulgar ſort of men, as by ſome unſkilful philoſophers, who have had wit and fancy enough to raiſe doubts, like evil ſpirits, but not judgment enough to ſend them down again.

*Cicero* thinks that a law and maxim of nature may be concluded from this aſſent of all nations, which, tho' I ſhould not univerſally grant, ſeeing ſometimes error and ſuperſtition may ſtrongly plead this argument; yet I think for thoſe things that are the matter of our firſt belief, that opinion may not be refuſed. For we cannot eaſily conceive how any firſt notion, that hath no dependency on any other antecedent to it, ſhould be generally entertained, did not the common dictate of nature or reaſon, acting alike in all men, move them to conſpire together in the embracing of it, tho' they knew not one another's minds *. But indeed in thoſe notions, which we may call ſecondary notions, there a *general notion* is not ſo free from all ſuſpicion; which may be cleared by taking an inſtance from our preſent argument. The notion of the immortality of the ſoul is ſuch an one as is generally owned by all thoſe who yet cannot collect it by a long ſeries and concatenation of ſenſible obſervations, and, by a logical dependence of one thing upon another, deduce it from ſenſible experiments; a thing that, it may be, was ſcarce ever done by the wiſeſt philoſophers, but is rather believed with a kind of repugnancy to ſenſe, which ſhews all things to be mortal, and which would have been too apt to have deluded the ruder ſort of men, did not a more powerful impreſſion upon their ſouls forcibly urge them to believe their own immortality. Tho' indeed, if the common notions of men were well examined, it may be ſome common notion adherent to this of the immortality may be as generally received, which yet in itſelf is falſe; and

* This it may be might firſt perſuade *Averroes* to think of a common intellect, becauſe of the uniform judgments of men in ſome things.

and that, by reaſon of a common prejudice with which the earthly and ſenſual part of man will equally poſſeſs men, until they come to be well acquainted with their own ſouls; as namely a notion of the ſoul's materiality, and, it may be, it's traduction too, which ſeems to be as generally received by the vulgar ſort as the former. But the reaſon of that it evident; for the ſouls of men exerciſing themſelves firſt of all merely by a *progreſſive kind of motion* *, ſpending themſelves about bodily and material acts, and converſing only with ſenſible things; they are apt to acquire ſuch deep ſtamps of material phantaſms to themſelves, that they cannot imagine their own being to be any other than material and diviſible, tho' of a fine ethereal nature: which kind of conceit, tho' it be inconſiſtent with an immortal and incorruptible nature, yet hath had too much prevalency in philoſophers themſelves, their minds not being ſufficiently abſtracted while they have contemplated the higheſt Being of all †. But ſuch common notions as theſe are, ariſing from the deceptions and miſtakes of ſenſe, ought not to prejudice thoſe which not ſenſe, but ſome higher power begets in all men. And ſo we have done with that.

The *ſecond* thing I ſhould premiſe ſhould be in place of a *poſtulatum* to our following demonſtrations, or rather a caution about them, which is, *That, to a right conceiving the force of any ſuch arguments as may prove the ſoul's immortality, there muſt be an antecedent converſe with our own ſouls.* It is no hard matter to convince any one (by clear and evident principles, derived from his own ſenſe of himſelf) who hath ever well meditated on the powers and operations of his own ſoul, that it is immaterial and immortal.

But thoſe very arguments which to ſuch perſons will be demonſtrative, to others will loſe ſomething of the ſtrength of probability: for indeed it is not poſſible for us well to know what our ſouls are, otherways than by their

* κινήσει προβατικῇ, as the Greek philoſopher expreſſeth.

† And ſome think *Ariſtotle* himſelf cannot be excuſed in this point, who ſeems to have thought God himſelf to be nothing elſe but μέγα ζῶον, as he ſtyles him.

their *circular and reflex motions* *, and converſe with themſelves, which only can ſteal from them their own ſecrets. All thoſe diſcourſes which have been written of the ſoul's heraldry, will not blazon it ſo well to us as itſelf will do. When we turn our own eyes in upon it, it will ſoon tell us its own royal pedigree and noble extraction, by thoſe ſacred hieroglyphics which it bears upon itſelf. We ſhall endeavour to unfold ſome of them in our following diſcourſe.

3. There is one thing more to be conſidered, which may ſerve as a common baſis or principle to our following arguments; and it is this hypotheſis, *That no ſubſtantial and individible thing ever periſheth.* And this *Epicurus* and all of his ſect muſt needs grant, as indeed they do, and much more than it is lawful to plead for; and therefore they make this one of the firſt principles of their atheiſtical philoſophy, *That nothing proceeds from nothing, and that no ſubſtance can be annihilated* †. But we ſhall here be content with that ſober theſis of *Plato*, who attributes the perpetuation of all ſubſtances to the benignity and liberality of the Creator; whom he therefore brings in thus ſpeaking to the angels, thoſe *young divinities* as he calls them, *You are not of yourſelves immortal, yet you ſhall not be diſſolved, neither ſhall you die; my will ſhall preſerve to you that being, which the principles of your nature cannot preſerve* ‡. But to return, *Plato* held, that the whole world, howſoever it might meet with many periodical mutations, ſhould remain eternally; which I think our Chriſtian divinity doth no where deny: and ſo *Plotinus* frames this general axiom, *that no ſubſtance ſhall ever periſh* ‖. And indeed if we collate all our own obſervations and experience, with ſuch as the hiſtory of former times hath delivered to us, we ſhall not find that ever any ſubſtance was quite loſt; but

* κινήσεις κυκλικαὶ.

† *Ex nihilo fieri nil, et in nihilum nil poſſe reverti.*

‡ ἀθάνατοι μὲν οὐκ ἐστε οὐδ' ἅλυτοι τοπάμπαν: οὐτι μὲν δὴ λυθήσεσθε γε, οὐδε λευζεσθε θανάτου μοίρας, τῆς ἐμῆς βυλήσεως, μείζονος ἔτι δεσμου ἀ κυριωτέρου λαχόντες, ἐκείνων οἷς ὅτε ἐγίγνεσθε, συνεδέσθε. *Plat. Timæus*, vol. i. p. 41.

‖ οὐδὲν ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος ἀπολεῖται.

but tho' this matter may, like the fabled *Proteus*, perpetually change its ſhape, yet it will conſtantly appear under one form or another, what art ſoever we uſe to deſtroy it. Therefore it was never doubted whether ever any piece of ſubſtance was loſt, till of latter times ſome hot-brained *Peripatetics*, who could not bring their fiery and ſubtile fancies into any cool judgment, began raſhly to determine that all material forms (as they are pleaſed to call them) were loſt. For, having once jumbled and crowded in a new kind of being, never antiently heard of, between the parts of a contradiction, that is matter and ſpirit, which they call *material forms*; becauſe they could not well tell whence theſe new upſtarts ſhould ariſe, nor how to diſpoſe of them when matter began to ſhift herſelf into ſome new garb, they condemned them to utter deſtruction: and yet, leſt they ſhould ſeem too rudely to controul all ſenſe and reaſon, they found out this common tale, which ſignifies nothing, that theſe *ſubſtantial forms were drawn from the power of matter*, whenever matter began to appear in any new diſguiſe, and afterwards again returned into the boſom of matter; and ſo they thought them not quite loſt. But this curioſity conſiſting only of words fortuitouſly packed up together, being too ſubtile for any ſober judgment to lay hold upon, and which they themſelves could never yet tell how to define; we ſhall as careleſsly lay it aſide, as they boldly obtrude it upon us, and take the common diſtinction of all *ſubſtantial being* for granted, *viz.* That it is either body, and ſo diviſible, and of three dimenſions; or elſe it is ſomething which is not properly a *body* or *matter*, and ſo hath no ſuch dimenſions, as that the parts thereof ſhould be crowding for place, and juſtling one with another, not being all able to couch together, or run one into another: and this is nothing elſe but what is commonly called *ſpirit*. Tho' yet we will not be too critical in depriving every thing which is not groſsly corporeal of all kind of extenſion.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

WE ſhall therefore now endeavour to prove, that the ſoul of man is ſomething really diſtinct from his body, of an indiviſible nature, and ſo cannot be divided into ſuch parts as ſhould ſhift one from another; and conſequently is apt of its own nature to remain to eternity, and will ſo remain, except the decrees of Heaven ſhould abandon it from being.

And *firſt*, we ſhall prove it from the abſurdity which would follow from the contrary aſſertion, and here do as the mathematicians uſe to do in ſuch kind of demonſtrations: we will ſuppoſe, that, if the reaſonable ſoul be not of ſuch an immaterial nature, then it muſt be a body, and ſo ſuppoſe it to be made up as all bodies are: where, becauſe the opinions of philoſophers differ, we ſhall only take one, *viz.* that of *Epicurus*, which ſuppoſeth it to be made up by a fortuitous concourſe of atoms; and in that demonſtrate againſt all the reſt: (for here indeed a particular demonſtration is an univerſal, as it is in all mathematical demonſtrations of this kind.) For, if all that which is the baſis of our reaſons and underſtandings, which we here call *the ſubſtance of the ſoul*, be nothing elſe but a mere body, and therefore be infinitely diviſible, as all bodies are; it will be all one in effect whatſoever notion we have of the generation or production thereof. We may give it, if we pleaſe, finer words, and uſe more circumſpect and cautious language about it than *Epicurus* did, as ſome that, leſt they ſhould ſpeak too rudely and ruſtically of it by calling it *matter*, will name it *the efflorescence of matter*; and yet, leſt that ſhould not be enough, add *Ariſtotle*'s *quinteſſence* to it too: they will be ſo trim and courtly in defining of it, that they will not call it by the name of *air*, *fire*, or *flame*, as ſome of the antient vulgar philoſophers did, but the *flower of flame:* and yet the *Epicurean* poet could uſe as much chymiſtry in exalting his fancy as theſe ſubtile doctors do; and when when he

he would dreſs out the notion of it more gaudily, he reſembles it to *the flavour of wine*, and *ſweet eſſence of ointment* *. But, when we have taken away this diſguiſe of wanton wit, we ſhall find nothing better than mere body, which will be recoiling back perpetually into its own ſluggiſh paſſiveneſs: tho' we may think we have quickened it never ſo much by this ſubtile artifice of words and phraſes, a man's new-born ſoul will for all this be but little better than his body; and, as that is, be but made up of ſome ſmall and thin ſhavings pared off from the bodies of the parents by a continual motion of the ſeveral parts of it; and muſt afterwards receive its augmentation from the food and nouriſhment which is taken in as the body doth. So that the very graſs we walk over in the fields, the duſt and mire in the ſtreets upon which we tread, may, according to the true meaning of this dull philoſophy, after many refinings, macerations and maturations, which nature performs by the help of motion, ſpring up into ſo many rational ſouls, and prove as wiſe as any *Epicurean*, and diſcourſe as ſubtilely of what it once was, when it lay drooping in a ſenſeleſs paſſiveneſs. This conceit is ſo groſs, that one would think it wanted nothing but that witty ſarcaſm that *Plutarch* employed againſt *Nicocles* the *Epicurean*, to confute it, *Thy mother was pregnant with ſuch atoms, which fortuitouſly aſſembling, produced a philoſopher* †.

But, becauſe the heavy minds of men are ſo frequently ſinking into this earthy fancy, we ſhall further ſearch into the receſſes of this philoſophy; and ſee how like that is to a rational ſoul, of which it pretends to declare the production. *Lucretius* firſt of all taking notice of the mighty ſwiftneſs of the ſoul in all its operations, leſt his matter ſhould be too ſoon tired and not able to keep pace with it, he firſt caſts the atoms prepared for this purpoſe into ſuch perfect ſpherical and ſmall

* *Flos Bacchi*, and *ſpiritus unguenti ſuavis*.

† ἡ μήτηρ ἀτόμους ἴσχειν ἐν αὐτῇ τοσαύτας, οἵαι συνελθοῦσαι σοφὸν ἂν ἐγέννησαν.

ſmall figures as might be moſt capable of theſe ſwift impreſſions; for ſo he,

*But what thus eaſy to be moved is found,*
*Of very little ſeeds and very round,*
*Muſt needs be fram'd; ſo that the weakeſt ſhove*
*May puſh them forward on, and make them move.*

But here, before we go any further, we might inquire what it ſhould be that ſhould move theſe ſmall inſenſible globes of matter. For the two principles of *Epicurus*, which he calls *the full* and *the void*, will hereby no means ſerve for the diſcovery of motion. For, tho' our common notions aſſure us that where-ever there is a multiplicity of parts, (as there is in every quantitative being) there may be a variety of application in thoſe parts one to another, and ſo a mobility; yet motion itſelf will not ſo eaſily ariſe out of a *plenum*, tho' we allow it an empty ſpace, and room enough to play up and down in. For we may conceive a body, which is his *plenum*, only as having three dimenſions, of length, breadth, and depth, without attributing any motion at all to it; and *Ariſtotle* doubts not herein to ſpeak plainly, *that motion cannot ariſe from a body* †. For indeed this power of motion muſt needs argue ſome efficient cauſe, as *Cicero* hath well obſerved, if we ſuppoſe any reſt antecedent; or if any body be once moving, it muſt alſo find ſome potent efficient to ſtay it and ſettle it in reſt, as *Simplicius* hath ſomewhere in his Comment upon *Epictetus* wiſely determined. So that, if we will ſuppoſe either motion or reſt to be contained originally in the nature of any body, we muſt of neceſſity conclude ſome potent efficient to produce the contrary, or elſe attribute this power to bodies themſelves; which will at laſt grow unbounded and indefinite, and indeed altogether inconſiſtent with the nature of a body.



* *At, quod mobile tantopere eſt, conſtare rotundis*
*Perquam ſeminibus debet, perquamque minutis,*
*Momine uti parvo poſſint impulſa moveri.* Lib. 3.

† ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος κίνησις οὐκ ἐγγίνεται. *De cælo.*

But yet, tho' we ſhould grant all this which *Lucretius* contends for, how ſhall we force up all theſe particles of matter into any true and real perceptions, and make them perceive their own or others motions, which he calls *motions fraught with ſenſe?* For he having firſt laid down his principles of all being, as he ſuppoſeth, (neither is he willing to leave his deities themſelves out of the number) he only requires theſe *poſtulata* by which to unfold the nature of all, *concourſe, motion, order, poſition, and figure**. But how any ſuch thing as ſenſation, or much leſs reaſon, ſhould ſpring out of this barren ſoil, how well tilled ſoever, no compoſed mind can imagine. For indeed that infinite variety which is in the magnitude of parts, their poſitions, figures and motions, may eaſily, and indeed muſt needs, produce an infinite variety of *phænomena*, which the *Epicurean* philoſophy calls events. And accordingly, where there is a ſentient faculty, it may receive the greateſt variety of impreſſions from them, by which the perceptions, which are the immediate reſult of a knowing faculty, will be diſtinguiſhed: yet cannot the power itſelf of ſenſation ariſe from them, no more than viſion can riſe out of a glaſs whereby it ſhould be able to perceive theſe appearances that paint themſelves upon it, tho' it were never ſo exactly poliſhed, and they much finer than they are or can be.

Neither can thoſe ſmall atoms, which in themſelves have no power of ſenſe, ever produce it by any kind of concourſe or motion; for ſo a cauſe might in its production riſe up above the height of its own nature and virtue; which I think every calm contemplator of truth will judge impoſſible: for ſeeing whatſoever any effect hath, it muſt needs derive from its cauſes, and can receive no other impreſſion than they can beſtow upon it; that ſignature muſt firſt be in the cauſe itſelf, which is by it derived to the effect. And therefore the wiſeſt philoſophers amongſt the antients univerſally concluded that there was ſome higher principle than mere matter, which was the cauſe of all life and ſenſe, and that to be

* *Concurſus, motus, ordo, poſitura, figuræ.* Lib. 1.

be immortal: as the *Platoniſts*, who thought this reaſon ſufficient to move them to aſſert a ſoul in the world. And *Ariſtotle*, tho' he talks much of nature, yet he delivers his mind ſo cloudily, that all that he hath ſaid of it may paſs with that which himſelf ſaid of his *Acroatici libri*, or phyſics, that they were *delivered and not delivered**. Nor is it likely that he who was ſo little ſatisfied with his own notion of nature as being the cauſe of all motion and reſt, as ſeemingly to deſert it while he placeth ſo many intelligences about the heavens, could much pleaſe himſelf with ſuch a groſs conceit of mere matter, that that ſhould be the true moving and ſentient eſſence of ſome other matter; as it is manifeſt he did not.

But indeed *Lucretius* himſelf, tho' he could in an exulting fit of his over-flushed and fiery fancy tell us,

*——Dull, moroſe,*
*And heavy ſeeds, can laughing things compoſe;*
*——Wiſe diſcourſive things can riſe*
*From ſeeds, that neither reaſon, nor are wiſe.* †

yet, in more cool thoughts, he found his own common notions too ſturdy to be ſo eaſily ſilenced; and therefore ſets his wits a-work to find the moſt quinteſſential particles of matter that may be, that might do that feat, which thoſe ſmooth ſpherical bodies, *heat*, *air*, and *vapour*, (for all come into this compoſition) could not do: and this was of ſuch a ſubtile and exalted nature, that his earthly fancy could not comprehend it; and therefore he confeſſes plainly he could not tell what name to give it, tho', for want of a better, he calls it *mobilem vim*, as neither his maſter before him, who was pleaſed to compound the ſoul (as *Plutarch* relates)



* ἐκδεδομένοι καὶ μὴ ἐκδεδομένοι.

† *Et ridere poteſt non ex ridentibu' factus,*
*Et ſapere, et doctis rationem reddere dictis,*
*Non ex ſeminibus ſapientibus, atque diſertis.* Lib. 2.

relates) of four ingredients, *of ſomething fiery, of ſomething airy, of ſomething windy, and of a fourth nameleſs ſomething from which proceeds its faculty of perception* *. But becauſe this giant-like *Proteus* found himſelf here bound with ſuch ſtrong cords, that notwithſtanding all his ſtruggling he could by no means diſengage himſelf from them, we ſhall relate his own words the more largely.

——— *Heat, and air and wind*
*Make up one nature mix'd, and cloſely join'd*
*With that quick force, which makes them move; and whence*
*Thro' all the bodies parts ſprings vigorous ſenſe:*
*This nature's deeply hid; this does poſſeſs*
*The inmoſt ſpace, and moſt remote receſs.*
*As in our limbs, the ſoul's removed from view,*
*Becauſe its ſeeds are thin and ſmall and few;*
*So this fourth nameleſs force within the ſoul*
*Lies hid, its chiefeſt part, and rules the whole* †.

Thus we ſee how he found himſelf overmaſtered with difficulties, while he endeavoured to find the place of the ſenſitive powers in matter: and yet this is the higheſt that he dares aim at, namely to prove that ſenſation might from thence derive its original, as obſtinately oppoſing any higher power of reaſon; of which conceſſion we ſhall hereafter make uſe.

But

* ἐκ ποιῦ πυρώδους, ἐκ ποιῦ ἀερώδους, ἐκ ποιῦ πνευματικοῦ, ἐκ τετάρτου τινὸς ἀκαλονομάστου ὃ ἦν αὐτῷ αἰσθητικόν. *Lib. 4. de placitis philoſophorum. c. 3.*

† *Sic calor, atque aer, & venti cæca poteſtas*
*Miſta creant unam naturam, & mobilis illa*
*Vis, initium motus abs ſe quæ dividit ollis:*
*Senſifer unde oritur primùm per viſcera motus.*
*Nam penitus prorſum latet hæc natura, ſubéſtque;*
*Nec magis hac infra quidquam eſt in corpore noſtro;*
*Atque anima eſt animæ proporrò totius ipſa.*
*Quod genus in noſtris membris & corpore toto*
*Miſta latens animi vis eſt, animæque poteſtas,*
*Corporibus quia de parvis pauciſque creata eſt.*
*Sic tibi nominis hæc expers vis, facta minutis*
*Corporibus, latet*——— lib. 3.

But ſurely had not the *Epicureans* abandoned all logic, together with ſome other ſciences (as *Cicero* and *Luertius* tell us they did) they would here have found themſelves too much preſt with this argument, (which yet ſome will think to be but frivolous in reſpect of ſome other) and have found it as little ſhort of a demonſtration to prove the ſoul's immortality as the *Platoniſts* themſelves did: but herein how they dealt, *Plotinus* hath well obſerved of them all who denied lives and ſouls to be immortal, and make them nothing but bodies, that when they were pinched with the ſtrength of any argument deduced from the *active eſſence* * of the ſoul, it was uſually amongſt them to call this body *A certain ſort of ſpirit* †, to which he well replies, *What is this certain ſort of which they ſo often ſpeak, and to which they fly for refuge, being conſtrained to acknowledge ſome active eſſence diſtinct from the body* ‡. Where by this *active eſſence* ſeems to be nothing meant but that ſame thing which *Lucretius* called *vim mobilem*, and he would not allow it to be any thing elſe but a body, though what kind of body he could not tell: yet by it he underſtands not merely an active power of motion, but a more ſubtile energy, whereby the force and nature of any motion is perceived and inſinuated by its own ſtrength in the bodies moved; as if theſe ſorry bodies by their impetuous juſtling together could awaken one another out of their lethargy, and make each other hear their mutual impetuous knocking, which is as abſurd as to think a muſical inſtrument ſhould hear its own ſounds, and take pleaſure in thoſe harmonious airs that are played upon it. For that which we call ſenſation, is not the motion or impreſſion which one body makes upon another, but a recognition of that motion; and therefore to attribute that to a body, is to make a body privy to its own acts and paſſions, to act upon itſelf, and to have a true and proper ſelf-



* φύσις δραστήριος.

† πνευμα πῶς ἔχον.

‡ τί τὸ πολυθρύλλητον ἀυλοῖς πῶς ἔχον, εἰς ὃ καταφεύγουσιν ἀναγκαζόμενοι τίθεσθαι ἄλλην παρὰ τὸ σῶμα φύσιν δραστήριον. Enn. 4. l. 7, c. 4.

feeling virtue; which *Porphyry* hath elegantly expreſſed, *In the ſenſations of living creatures the ſoul moves, as if unbodied harmony herſelf ſhould play upon an inſtrument, and ſmartly touch the well-tuned ſtrings: but the body is like that harmony which dwells inſeparably in the ſtrings themſelves which have no perception of it* *.

Thus we ſhould now leave this topic of our demonſtration; only we ſhall add this as an appendix to it, which will further manifeſt the ſoul's incorporeal and immaterial nature, that is, that there is a higher principle of knowledge in man than mere ſenſe, neither is that the ſole original of all that ſcience which breaks forth in the minds of men; which yet *Lucretius* maintains, as being afraid leſt he ſhould be awakened out of this pleaſant dream of his, ſhould any higher power rouſe his ſleepy ſoul: and therefore he thus lays down the opinion of his ſect,

*From ſenſe all truth and certainty infer;*
*In vain ſome ſtrive to prove, that ſenſe can err:*
*For that which would convince, which would oppoſe*
*The ſenſes, muſt be ſurer far than thoſe* †:

But yet this goodly champion doth but lay ſiege to his own reaſon, and endeavour to ſtorm the main fort thereof, which but juſt before he defended againſt the *Sceptics* who maintained that opinion, *That nothing could be known*: to which he having replied by that vulgar argument, that if nothing can be known, then neither do we know this *That we know nothing*; he purſues them more cloſely with another, *That neither could they know what it is to know, or what it is to be ignorant*,

But

* ὅταν τὸ ζῶον αἰσθάνηται, ἔοικεν ἡ μὲν ψυχὴ ἁρμονίᾳ χωρισθῇ ἐξ ἑαυτῆς τὰς χορδὰς κινύσῃ ἡρμοσμένας τῇ ἢ ἐν ταῖς χορδαῖς ἁρμονίᾳ ἀχωρίστῳ τὸ σῶμα. *In tract.* Αφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά.

† *Invenies primis ab ſenſibus eſſe creatam*
*Notitiam veri, neque ſenſus poſſe refelli:*
*Nam majore fide debet reperirier illud,*
*Sponte ſua veris quod poſſit vincere falſa.* Lib. 4.

*But grant this might be known, and that he knew;*
*Yet ſince he has diſcovered nothing true:*
*What mark, or what criterion then can ſhow,*
*Or tell, what 'tis to know, or not to know?*
*Or how could he, what truth, what falſehood, learn?*
*How what was doubt, what certainty diſcern?* *

But yet if our ſenſes were only judges of things, this reflex knowledge whereby we know what it is to know, would be as impoſſible as he makes it for ſenſe to have innate ideas of its own, antecedent to thoſe ſtamps which the radiations of external objects imprint upon it. For this knowledge muſt be antecedent to all that judgment which we paſs upon any thing perceived, ſeeing except we firſt know what it is to know, we could not judge or determine aright upon the approach of any of theſe images to our ſenſes.

But our author may perhaps yet ſeem to make a more full confeſſion for us in theſe two points.

*Firſt*, That no ſenſe can judge another's objects, nor convince it of any miſtake,

*——From what the other ſenſes ſhew,*
*In vain we ſeek to prove one ſenſe untrue;*
*Or from itſelf* †——

If therefore there be any ſuch thing within us as controuls our ſenſes, as all know there is; then muſt that be of an higher nature than our ſenſes are.

But *ſecondly*, he grants further, that all our ſenſation is nothing elſe but perception, and therefore whereſoever there is any miſtake, that muſt ariſe from ſomething elſe within us beſide the power of ſenſe,

——*Not*

* *Quæram, quem in rebus veri nil viderit ante;*
*Unde ſciat, quid ſit ſcire, & neſcire viciſſim:*
*Notitiam veri quæ res falſiſque creârit.* lib. 4.
† *Non poſſunt alios alii convincere ſenſus,*
*Nec porrò poterunt ipſi reprehendere ſeſe.* lib. 4.

——*Not ſenſe, but judgment 'tis miſtakes,*
*Or fancy'd things for real objects takes* *.

In which words he hath very happily lighted upon the proper function of ſenſe, and the true reaſon of all thoſe miſtakes which we call the deceptions of ſenſe, which indeed are not truly ſo, ſeeing they ariſe only from a higher faculty, and conſiſt not in ſenſation itſelf, but in thoſe deductions and corollaries that our judgments draw from it.

We ſhall here therefore grant that which the *Epicurean* philoſophy, and the *Peripatetic* too, though not without much caution, pleads for univerſally, *That our ſenſes are never deceived*, whether they be ſound or diſtempered, or whatſoever proportion or diſtance the object or *medium* bears to it: for if we well examine this matter, we ſhall find that nothing of judgment belongs to ſenſe, it conſiſting only in *perception* †, neither can it make any juſt obſervation of thoſe objects that are without, but only diſcerns its own paſſions ‡, and tells how it finds itſelf affected, and not what is the true cauſe of thoſe impreſſions which it finds within itſelf ‖; and therefore when the eye finds the ſun's circle repreſented within itſelf of no greater a bigneſs than a foot-diameter, it is not at all herein miſtaken; nor a diſtempered palate, when it taſtes a bitterneſs in the ſweeteſt honey, as *Proclus* a famous mathematician and *Platoniſt* hath well determined, *The ſenſes in all things of this nature do but declare their own paſſions or perceptions, which*

——* *Quoniam pars horum maxima fallit*
*Propter opinatus animi, quos addimus ipſi,*
*Pro viſis ut ſint, quæ non ſunt ſenſibu' viſa.* lib. 4.

† ἐν αἰσθητηρίῳ πάθει.

‡ Is nothing elſe but γνῶσις τῶν παθῶν,

‖ Which ſeems to be the reaſon of that old philoſophical maxim recited by *Ariſtotle l.* 3. *de anima, cap.* 2. ὅτι μὴ εἶναι ἄνευ ὄψεως, οὐδὲ χυμὸν ἄνευ γεύσεως, that theſe *ſimulachra* were only in our ſenſes.

*which are always such as they seem to be* *, whether there be any such correspondent impression in the object as bears a true analogy with them or not: and therefore in truth they are never deceived in the execution of their own functions. And so doth *Aristotle* conclude, that error is neither in sense nor fancy, *It is in no faculty but only that in which is reason* †. Though it be as true on the other side, that *Epicurus* and all his sect were deceived, while they judged the sun and moon and all the stars to be no bigger than that image which they found of them in their own eyes; for which silly conceit though they had been for many ages sufficiently laughed at by wise men, yet could not *Lucretius* tell how to enlarge his own fancy, but believes the image in his own visive organ to be adequate to the sun itself, in despite of all mathematical demonstration; as indeed he must needs, if there were no higher principle of knowledge than sense is, which is the most indisciplinable thing that may be, and can never be taught that truth which reason and understanding might attempt to force into it. Though reason inculcates this notion ten thousand times over, that the sun is bigger than the earth, yet will not the eye be taught to see it any bigger than a foot-breadth.

Thus I hope by this time we have found out *something more excellent than the powers of sense* ‡, some more noble power in the soul than that is by which it accommodates itself to the body, and, according to the measure and proportion thereof, converseth with external matter. And this is the true reason why we are so apt to be mistaken in sensible objects, because our souls imbibing the knowledge of external things thereby, and not minding the proportion that is between the body and them, mindless of its own notions, collates their corporeal impressions with external objects themselves, and judges of them one by another. But whensoever our souls act in their own power and strength, untwisting themselves

* αἱ γὰρ αἰσθήσεις τὸ ἑαυτῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσι πάθημα, καὶ οὐ πάντη ψεύδονται. *in Plat. Tim.*

† οὐδενὶ ὑπάρχει ᾧ μὴ καὶ λόγος, *l.* 3. *de Animâ. c.* 3.

‡ κρείττονά τινα της αἰσθήσεος δυνάμιν,

themſelves from every thing corporeal, they then can find confidence enough to judge of things in a ſeeming contradiction to all thoſe other corporeal viſions.

And ſo I ſuppoſe this argument will amount to no leſs than a demonſtration of the ſoul's immateriality, ſeeing to all ſincere underſtanding it is neceſſary that it ſhould thus abſtract itſelf from all corporeal commerce, and return from thence nearer into itſelf.

Now what we have to this purpoſe more generally intimated, we ſhall further branch out in theſe two or three particulars.

*Firſt*, That that mental faculty and power whereby we judge and diſcern things, is ſo far from being a body, that it muſt withdraw itſelf from all bodily operation whenſoever it deſires clearly to diſcern truth. For ſhould our ſouls always mould their judgment of things according to thoſe feelings and impreſſions which ſeem to be framed thereof in the body, they muſt then do nothing elſe but bind up errors and deluſions one with another inſtead of truth: as ſhould the judgments of our underſtandings wholly depend upon the ſight of our eyes, we ſhould then conclude that our mere acceſſes and receſſes from any viſible object have ſuch a magical power to change the magnitudes of viſible objects, and to transform them into all varieties of figures and faſhions; and ſo attribute all that variety to them which we find in our corporeal perceptions. Or ſhould we judge of things which may be taſted, by our taſte, we ſhould attribute to one and the ſelf-ſame thing all that variety which we find in our own palates. Which is an unqueſtionable argument that that power whereby we diſcern of things and make judgments of them different and ſometimes contrary to thoſe perceptions that are the neceſſary reſults of all organical functions, is ſomething diſtinct from the body; and therefore tho' the ſoul be various and diviſible accidentally in theſe ſenſations and motions wherein it extends and ſpreads itſelf as it were upon the body, and ſo according to the nature and meaſure thereof perceives its impreſſions; yet it is in its own nature indiviſible, returning into itſelf.

ſelf *. Whenever it purpoſes to ſpeculate truth itſelf, it will not liſten to the ſeveral clamours and votes of theſe rude ſenſes which always ſpeak with divided tongues; but it conſults ſome clearer oracle within itſelf: and therefore *Plotinus*, hath well concluded concerning the body, that ſhould a man make uſe of his body in his ſpeculations, it will entangle his mind with ſo many contradictions, that it will be impoſſible to attain to any true knowledge of things†. We ſhall conclude this therefore, as *Cicero* doth his contemplation of the ſoul's operations about the frame of nature, the fabric of the heavens and motions of the ſtars, *The mind which underſtands theſe things, reſembles that cœleſtial mind which framed them*‡.

*Secondly*, We alſo find ſuch a faculty within our own ſouls as collects and unites all the perceptions of our ſeveral ſenſes, and is able to compare them together; ſomething in which they all meet as in one centre: which *Plotinus* hath well expreſſed, *That in which all thoſe ſeveral ſenſations meet as ſo many lines drawn from ſeveral points in the circumference, and which comprehends them all, muſt needs be one* ‖. For ſhould that be various and conſiſting of ſeveral parts, which thus receives all theſe various impreſſions, then muſt the ſentence and judgment paſſed upon them be various too. *Ariſtotle* ſays, *That muſt be one that judgeth things to be diverſe* §; and that muſt judge too inſtantaneouſly ſetting all before it at once **. Beſides we could not conceive how

* As *Plato* hath well obſerved, μεριστὴ περὶ τὰ σώματα, yet it is ἐν ἑαυτῇ ἀμερίστη.

† ἐμπόδιον τοῦτο, εἴ τις ἀυτῳ ἐν τοις σκέψεσι προσχρῶτο, *Enn.* 4. *l.* 3.

‡ *Animus qui hæc intelligit, ſimilis eſt ejus qui ea fabricatus in cœlo eſt.*

‖ δεῖ τοῦτο ὥσπερ κέντρον εἶναι, γραμμὰς ὃ συλλαβόυσας ἀπὸ περιφερείας κύκλω, τὰς πανταχόθεν αισθήσεις πρὸς τοῦτο περαίνειν, ἓν τοιοῦτον τὸ ἀντιλαμβανόμενον εἶναι ἓν ὄντως, *Enn.* 4. *l.* 7. *c.* 6.

§ Δεῖ τὸ ἓν λέγειν ὅ τι ἕτερον. *de Anima.*

** ἐν ἀχωρίστῳ χρόνῳ.

how ſuch immenſe variety of impreſſions could be made upon any piece of matter, which ſhould not obliterate and deface one another. And therefore *Plotinus* hath well diſputed againſt them who make all ſenſation *impreſſions on the ſoul* *: which brings me to the third.

*Thirdly*, That knowledge which the ſoul retains in itſelf of things paſt, and in ſome ſort previſion of things to come, whereby many grow ſo ſagacious in foreſeeing future events, that they know how to deliberate and diſpoſe of preſent affairs, ſo as to be ready furniſhed and prepared for ſuch emergencies as they ſee in a train and ſeries of cauſes which ſometimes work but contingently: I cannot think *Epicurus* himſelf could in his cool thoughts be ſo unreaſonable as to perſuade himſelf, that all the confuſion and jarring of atoms could produce ſuch a divine piece of wiſdom as this is. What matter can thus bind up paſt, preſent and future time together? which while the ſoul of man doth, it ſeems (as far as its own finite nature will permit the attempt) to imitate the eternity of God; and gathering together a long ſeries of duration into itſelf, makes an eſſay to free itſelf from the rigid laws of it, and to purchaſe to itſelf the freedom of a true eternity. And as by its *chronical and ſucceſſive operations* †, it by degrees unravels and unfolds the contexture of its own indefinite intellectual powers; ſo by this memory and previſion it recollects and twiſts them up all together again into itſelf. And though it ſeems to be continually ſliding from itſelf in thoſe ſeveral viciſſitudes and changes through which it runs in the conſtant variety of its own effluxes and emanations: yet it is always returning back again to its firſt original by a ſwift remembrance of all thoſe motions and multiplicity of operations which have begot in it the firſt ſenſe of this conſtant efflux. As if we ſhould ſee a ſun-beam perpetually flowing forth from the bright body of the ſun, and yet ever returning back to it again; it never loſeth any part

* τυπώσεις ἢ ἐνσφραγίσεις ἐν ψυχῇ.

† χρονικοὶ πρόοδοι, as the *Platoniſts* are wont to ſpeak.

part of its being, becauſe it never forgets what itſelf was: and though it may number out never ſo vaſt a length of its duration, yet it never comes nearer to its old age, but carrieth a lively ſenſe of its youth and infancy along with it, which it can at pleaſure lay hold on.

But if our ſouls were nothing elſe but a complex of fluid atoms, we ſhould be continually roving from ourſelves, and ſoon forget what we once were. The new matter that would come in to fill up that vacuity which the old had made by its departure, would never know what the old were, nor what that ſhould be that was to ſucceed; *that new pilgrim and ſtranger-like ſoul would always be ignorant of what the other before it knew, and we ſhould be wholly ſome other bulk of being than we were before**, as *Plotinus* hath excellently obſerved. It was a famous ſpeech of wiſe *Heraclitus*, *A man cannot enter twice into the ſame river*†, by which he was wont ſymbolically to expreſs the conſtant flux of matter, which is the moſt unſtable thing that may be. And if the philoſophy of *Epicurus* could free this heap of refined atoms of which it makes the ſoul to conſiſt, from this inconſtant and flitting nature, and teach us how it could be ſome ſtable and immutable thing, always reſting entire while it is in the body; tho' we would thank him for ſuch a goodly conceit as this is, yet we would make no doubt but it might as well be able to preſerve itſelf from diſſolution and diſſipation out of this groſs body as in it: ſeeing it is no more ſecured from the conſtant impulſes of that more groſs matter which is reſtleſly moving up and down in the body than it is out of it: and yet for all that, we ſhould take the leave to aſk *Cicero*'s queſtion with his ſober diſdain, *Do ſuch powers of memory appear to be the pro-*



* ὥσπερ ξένη ψυχὴ αὕτη ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ ἔσαι, ὧν ἡ ἑτέρα οἶδε, ἃ ὥσπερ ἄλλος ὄγκος ἡμῶν. *Enn.* 4. *l.* 7. *c.* 5.

† εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν δὶς οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης.

*duction of the earth, or of this clouded and dusky ſky**. Such a jewel as this is too precious to be found in a dunghill: mere matter could never thus ſtretch forth its feeble force, and ſpread itſelf over all its own former pre-exiſtencies. We may as well ſuppoſe this dull and heavy earth we tread upon to know how long it hath dwelt in this part of the univerſe that now it doth, and what variety of creatures have in all paſt ages ſprung forth from it, and all thoſe occurrences and events which have, during all this time, happened upon it.

## CHAP. IV.

WE have done with that which we intended for the firſt part of our diſcourſe of the ſoul's immortality: we have hitherto looked at it rather in the concrete than in the abſtract, rather as a thing complicated with the body and united to it; and therefore conſidered it in thoſe operations, which, as they are not proper to the body, ſo neither are they altogether independent of it, but are rather of a mixt nature.

We ſhall now take notice of it in thoſe properties, in the exerciſe whereof it hath leſs commerce with the body, and more plainly declares to us its own high deſcent, that it is able to ſubſiſt and act without the aid and aſſiſtance of this matter which it informs.

And here we ſhall firſt of all inquire, *Whether it hath ſome kind of action ſo proper and peculiar to itſelf as not to depend upon the body.* And this ſoon offers itſelf in the firſt place to us in thoſe elicite motions of it, as the moraliſts are wont to name them, which, tho' they may end in thoſe they call imperate acts, yet have their firſt emanation from nothing elſe but the ſoul itſelf.

For

* *Quid, obſecro, terrâne tibi aut hoc nebuloſo et caliginoſo cælo aut fata aut concreta videtur tanta vis memoriæ.* *Tuſcul. Diſp.* lib. 1. § 25.

For this purpoſe we ſhall take notice of two ſorts of actions which are obvious to the experience of every one that obſerves himſelf, according to a double ſource and emanation of them. The firſt are thoſe actions which ariſe up within us without any animadverſion; the other are thoſe that are conſequent to it.

1. For we find frequently ſuch motions within ourſelves which firſt are, before we take notice of them, and which by their own turbulency and impetuouſneſs force us to an advertency: as thoſe fiery ſpirits and that inflamed blood which ſometimes fly up into the head; or thoſe groſs and earthly fumes that diſturb our brains; the ſtirring of many other humours which beget within us grief, melancholy, anger, or mirth, or other paſſions; which have their riſe from ſuch cauſes as we were not aware of, nor conſented to their creating this trouble to us. Beſides all thoſe paſſions and perceptions which are begotten within us by ſome external motions which derive themſelves thro' our ſenſes, and fiercely knocking at the door of our minds and underſtandings, force them ſometimes from their deepeſt debates and muſings of ſome other thing, to open to them and give them an audience.

Now as to ſuch motions as theſe are, it being neceſſary for the preſervation of our bodies that our ſouls ſhould be acquainted with them, a man's body was ſo contrived and his ſoul ſo united to it, that they might have a ſpeedy acceſs to the ſoul. Indeed ſome antient philoſophers thought that the ſoul deſcending more deeply into the body, as they expreſs it, firſt begot theſe corporeal motions unbeknown to itſelf by reaſon of its more deep immerſion, which afterwards by their impetuouſneſs excited its advertency. But whatſoever truth there is in that aſſertion, we clearly find from the relation of our own ſouls themſelves, that our ſoul diſowns them, and acknowledgeth no ſuch motions to have been ſo buſy by her commiſſion; neither knows what they are, from whence they ariſe, or whither they tend, until ſhe hath duly examined them. But theſe corporeal motions, as they ſeem to ariſe from nothing elſe but merely from the frame of the body itſelf,

itſelf; ſo they could not at all be ſenſated but by the ſoul.

Neither indeed are all our own corporeal actions perceived by us, but only thoſe that may ſerve to maintain a good correſpondence and intelligence between the ſoul and body, and ſo foment and cheriſh that ſympathy between them, which is neceſſary for the ſubſiſtence and well-being of the whole man in this mundane ſtate. And therefore our ſouls are informed of very little of that which is commonly done in our body. The conſtant circulation of blood thro' all our veins and arteries; the common motions of our animal ſpirits in our nerves; the maceration of food within our ſtomachs, and the diſtribution of chyle and nouriſhment to every part that wants the relief of it; the conſtant flux and reflux of more ſedate humours within us; the diſſipations of our corporeal matter by inſenſible tranſpiration, and the acceſſes of new matter in the room of it; all this we are little acquainted with by any vital energy which ariſeth from the union of ſoul and body: and therefore, when we would acquaint ourſelves with the anatomy and vital functions of our own bodies, we are fain to uſe the ſame courſe and method that we would to find out the ſame things in any other kind of animal, as if our ſouls had as little to do with any of theſe in our own bodies, as they have in the bodies of any brute creature.

2. But, on the other ſide, we know as well, that many things which are done by us, are done at the dictate and by the commiſſion of our own wills; and therefore all ſuch actions as theſe are, we know, without any great ſtore of diſcourſive inquiry, to attribute to their own proper cauſes, as ſeeing the efflux and propagation of them. We do not by a naked ſpeculation know our bodies firſt to have need of nouriſhment, and then by the edict of our wills enjoin our ſpirits and humours to put themſelves into an hungry and craving poſture within us by corroding the tunicles of the ſtomach; but we firſt find our own ſouls ſollicited by theſe motions, which yet we are able to gainſay, and to deny thoſe petitions which they offer up to us. We know we commonly

monly meditate and diſcourſe of ſuch arguments as we ourſelves pleaſe: we mould deſigns, and draw up a plot of means anſwerable thereto, according as the free vote of our own ſouls determines; and uſe our own bodies many times, notwithſtanding all the reluctancies of their nature, only as our inſtruments to ſerve the will and pleaſure of our ſouls. All which, as they evidently manifeſt a true diſtinction between the ſoul and the body, ſo they do as evidently prove the ſupremacy and dominion which the ſoul hath over the body. Our moraliſts frequently diſpute what kind of government that is whereby the ſoul, or rather will, rules over the ſenſitive appetite, which they ordinarily reſolve to be *imperium politicum*; tho' I ſhould rather ſay, that all good men have rather a true *deſpotical power* over their ſenſitive faculties, and over the whole body, tho' they uſe it only according to the laws of reaſon and diſcretion. And therefore the *Platoniſts* and *Stoics* thought the ſoul of man to be abſolutely freed from all the power of aſtral neceſſity, and uncontroulable impreſſions ariſing from the ſubordination and mutual ſympathy and dependence of all mundane cauſes, which is their proper notion of fate. Neither ever durſt that bold aſtrology, which preſumes to tell the fortunes of all corporeal eſſences, attempt to enter into the ſecrets of man's ſoul, or predict the deſtinies thereof. And indeed whatever the deſtinies thereof may be that are contained in the vaſt volume of an infinite and Almighty Mind; yet we evidently find *a liberty of will within ourſelves* *, maugre the ſtubborn malice of all ſecond cauſes. And *Ariſtotle*, who ſeems to have diſputed ſo much againſt that *ſelf-motion* † of ſouls which his maſter before him had ſoberly maintained, does indeed but quarrel with that common ſenſe and experience which we have of our ſouls; this *ſelf-motion* of the ſoul being nothing elſe but that innate force and power which it hath within it, to ſtir up theſe thoughts and motions within itſelf to which it finds itſelf moſt free. And therefore, when we re-



* τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, an ἀυτεξούσιον.
† ἀυτοκινησία.

flect upon the productions of our own ſouls, we are ſoon able to find out the firſt efficient cauſe of them. And, tho' the ſubtilty of ſome wits may have made it difficult to find out whether the underſtanding or the will, or ſome other faculty of the ſoul, be the firſt mover*; yet we know it is originally the ſoul itſelf, whoſe vital acts they all are: and, altho' it be not the firſt cauſe, as deriving all its virtue from itſelf, as *Simplicius* diſtinguiſheth; yet it is vitally co-operating with the firſt cauſes of all †. But, on the other ſide, when we come to examine thoſe motions which ariſe from the body, this ſtream runs ſo far under ground, that we know not how to trace it to the head of it; but we are fain to analyſe the whole artifice, looking from the ſpirits to the blood, from that to the heart, viewing all along the mechanical contrivance of veins and arteries: neither know we, after all our ſearch, whether there be any perpetual movement in our own bodies, or whether all the motions thereof be only by the redundancy of ſome external motions without us; nor how to find the firſt mover in nature: and tho' we could find out that, yet we know that there is a fatal determination which fits in all the wheels of mere corporeal motion; neither can they exerciſe any ſuch noble freedom as we conſtantly find in the wills of men, which are as large and unbounded in all their elections, as reaſon itſelf can repreſent being itſelf to be.

*Lucretius*, that he might elude this argument, according to the genius of his ſect, feigns this liberty to ariſe from *a motion of declination*, whereby his atoms, always moving downwards, by their own weight, towards the centre of the world, are carried a little obliquely, as if they tended toward ſome point different from it. Which riddle, tho' it be as good as any elſe which they, who held the materiality and mortality of ſouls in their own nature, can frame to ſolve this difficulty; yet is of ſuch a private interpretation, that I believe no *Oedipus* is able to

* Whence the *motus primò primus* (as they are pleaſed to call it) proceeds.

† Not ἀυτόθεν πρώτη, but ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ῥητικὴ. *Simplic.* lib. 1. *De An.* cap. 1.

to expound it. But yet, by what we may gueſs at it, we ſhall eaſily find, that this inſolent conceit (as well as every thing elſe of this nature) deſtroys the freedom of will, more than any fate which the ſevereſt cenſors thereof, whom he ſometimes taxeth, ever ſet over it. For how can any thing be made ſubject to a free and impartial debate of reaſon, or fall under the level of free-will, if all things be the mere reſult either of a fortuitous or fatal motion of bodies, which can have no power or dominion over themſelves? and why ſhould he, or his great maſter, find ſo much fault with the ſuperſtition of the world, and condemn the opinions of other men, when they compare them with that tranſcendent ſagacity of which they believe themſelves to be maſters, if all was nothing elſe but the mere iſſue of material motions; ſeeing that neceſſity which would ariſe from a different concourſe and motion of ſeveral particles of matter, begetting that diverſity of opinions and wills, would excuſe them all from any blame?

Therefore, to conclude this argument, whatever eſſence finds this freedom within itſelf, whereby it is abſolved from the rigid laws of matter, may know itſelf alſo to be immaterial; and, having dominion over its own actions, it will never deſert itſelf: and, becauſe it finds itſelf *to be moved by its own, and not an external force* *, it feels itſelf able to preſerve itſelf from the foreign force of matter, and can ſay of all thoſe aſſaults which are at any time made againſt thoſe ſorry mud-walls, which in this life incloſe it, as the *Stoic* did, *all this is nothing to me* †, who am yet free, and can command within, when this feeble carcaſs is able no longer to obey me; and, when that is ſhattered and broken down, I can live any where elſe without it; for I was not *that*, but had only a command over it, while I dwelt in it.

But before we wholly deſert this head, we may add ſome further ſtrength to it, from the obſervation of that conflict which the reaſons and underſtandings of men maintain

* *Non vi alienâ, ſed ſuâ moveri*, as *Cicero* argues.
† οὐδὲν πρὸς ἐμέ.

maintain againſt the ſenſitive appetite: and whereſoever the higher powers of reaſon in the ſouls of men prevail not, but are vanquiſhed by the impetuouſneſs of their ſenſual affections, thro' their own neglect of themſelves; yet are they never ſo broken, but that they may ſtrengthen themſelves again: and, where they ſubdue not mens inordinate paſſions and affections, yet even there will they condemn them for them. Whereas, were a man made all of one piece, and made up of nothing elſe but matter, theſe corporeal motions could never check or controul themſelves, theſe material dimenſions could not ſtruggle with themſelves, or by their own ſtrength render themſelves any thing elſe than what they are. But this *ſelf-potent life* * which is in the ſoul of man, acting upon itſelf, and drawing forth its own latent energy, finds itſelf able to tame the outward man, and ſubdue thoſe rebellious motions which ariſe from the mere animal powers, and to tame and appeaſe all thoſe ſeditions and mutinies that it finds there. And, if any can conceive all this to be nothing but a mere fighting of the malcontented pieces of matter one againſt another, each ſtriving for ſuperiority and pre-eminence; I ſhould not think it worth the while to teach ſuch an one any higher learning, as looking upon him to be endued with no higher a ſoul than that which moves in the beaſts that periſh.

## CHAP. V.

WE ſhall now conſider the ſoul a-while in a further degree of abſtraction, and look at it in thoſe actions which depend not at all upon the body, wherein it *converſeth only with its own being* †. Which we ſhall firſt conſider in thoſe mathematical notions which it contains

* ἀυτεξούσιος ζωὴ, as the Greeks call it.
† ἢ ἑαυτῦ συνουσίαν ἀσπάζεσθαι, as the Greeks ſpeak.

contains in itſelf, and ſends forth from within itſelf; which, as they are of themſelves indiviſible, and of ſuch a perfect nature as cannot be received or immerſed into matter; ſo they argue that ſubject in which they are ſeated to be of a true ſpiritual and immaterial nature. Such as a pure point, a line without breadth, latitude abſtracted from all profundity, the perfection of figures, equality, proportion, ſymmetry and diverſity of magnitudes, the riſe and propagation of dimenſions, infinite diviſibility, and many ſuch like things; which every ingenious ſon of that art cannot but acknowledge to be the true characters of ſome immaterial being; ſeeing they were never buried in matter, nor extracted out of it: and yet theſe are tranſcendently more certain and infallible principles of demonſtration than any ſenſible thing can be. There is no geometrician but will acknowledge angular ſections, or the cutting of an arch into any number of parts required, to be moſt exact without any diminution of the whole; but yet no mechanical art can poſſibly ſo perform either, but that the place of ſection will detract ſomething from the whole. If any ſhould endeavour, by a mechanical ſubtilty, to double a cube, as the *Delian* oracle once commanded the *Athenians*, requiring them to duplicate the dimenſions of *Apollo*'s altar; he would find it as impoſſible as they did, and be as much laughed at for his pains as ſome of their mechanics were. If therefore no matter can be capable of any geometrical effections, and the precepts of geometry be altogether inimitable in the pureſt matter that fancy can imagine; then muſt they needs depend upon ſomething infinitely more pure than matter, which hath all that ſtability and certainty within itſelf, which it gives to thoſe infallible demonſtrations.

We need not here diſpute with *Empedocles*, *That we know earth by earth, and water by water* *, that is, by the archetypal ideas of all things in our own ſouls; tho' it may be it were no hard matter to prove that, as in this caſe St. *Auſtin* did †, when he would prove the immortality of the ſoul from theſe notions

* Γαίῃ μὲν γὰρ γαῖαν ὀπώπαμεν, ὕδατι δ' ὕδωρ.
† In his book *De Quant. Animæ.*

notions of quantity, which come not by any poſſible ſenſe or experience which we can make of bodily being; and therefore concludes they muſt needs be immediately engraven upon an immaterial ſoul. For, tho' we could ſuppoſe our ſenſes to be the ſchool-dames that firſt taught us the alphabet of this learning; yet nothing elſe but a true mental eſſence could be capable of it, or ſo much improve it as to unbody it all, and diveſt it of any ſenſible garments, and then only, when it hath done it, embrace it as its own, and commence a true and perfect underſtanding of it. And, as we all hold it impoſſible to contract any material quality, which will perpetually ſpread itſelf commenſurably to the matter it is in, into a mathematical point; ſo is it much more impoſſible to extend and ſtretch forth any immaterial and unbodied quality or notion according to the dimenſions of matter, and yet to preſerve the integrity of its own nature.

Beſides, in theſe geometrical ſpeculations, we find that our ſouls will not conſult with our bodies, or aſk any leave of our fancies in what manner, or how far they ſhall diſtribute their own notions by a continued progreſs of invention; but ſpending upon their own ſtock, are moſt free and liberal, and make fancy only to ſerve their own purpoſe in painting out, not what matter will afford a copy of, but what they themſelves will dictate to it; and, if that ſhould be too buſy, ſilence and controul it by their own imperial laws. They ſo little care for matter in this kind of work, that they baniſh it as far as may be from themſelves, or elſe chaſtiſe its unruly nature, in order to make it ſubmiſſive to their ſovereign commands. Theſe embodied bodies (for ſo this preſent argument will allow me to call them) with which our ſenſes converſe, are perpetually juſtling together, contending ſo irreſiſtably each for its own room and ſpace, and will not admit of any other into it, preſerving their own intervals: but when they are once in their unbodied nature entertained into the mind, they can eaſily penetrate one another *. The ſoul can eaſily heap up the vaſteſt number in herſelf, and

* ὅλα δι' ὅλα.

and by her own force ſuſtain them all, and make them all couch together in the ſame ſpace: ſhe can eaſily aſſemble all thoſe five regular bodies together in her own imagination, and blend them together, and then entering into their centre diſcern all their properties and ſeveral reſpects one to another; and thus eaſily find herſelf freed from all material or corporeal confinement; ſhewing how all that which we call body, rather iſſued forth by an infinite projection from ſome mind, than that it ſhould exalt itſelf into the nature of any mental being; and, as the *Platoniſts* and *Pythagoreans* have long ſince well obſerved, how our bodies ſhould rather be in our ſouls, than our ſouls in them. And ſo I have done with that particular.

## CHAP. VI.

AND now have we traced the immortality of the ſoul, before we were aware, thro' thoſe three relations, or (if you will) degrees of knowledge, which *Proclus* hath attributed to it; which he calls *the chain of intellectual powers* *. The firſt is a naked perception of ſenſible impreſſions, without any work of reaſon. The ſecond, a miſcellaneous kind of knowledge ariſing from a collation of its ſenſations with its own more obſcure and dark ideas. The third, diſcourſe and reaſon, by which the *Platoniſts* deſcribe mathematical knowledge, which, becauſe it ſpins out its own notions by a conſtant ſeries of deduction, knitting up conſequences by demonſtrations, is by him called *a progreſſive kind of knowledge*; to which he adds a fourth, which we ſhall now make uſe of for a further proof of the immortality of the ſoul. There is therefore, fourthly, *a knowledge without progreſſion* †, which is a naked intuition of eternal

* τῶν γνωστικῶν δυνάμεων σειρὰν.

† 1. αἴσθησις ἄλογος. 2. δόξα μετὰ λόγου. 3. διάνοια ἢ λόγος, or νόησις μεταβατικὴ. 4. νόησις ἀμεταβάτως.

eternal truth which is always the ſame, which never riſes nor ſets, but continually fills the whole horizon of the ſoul with a mild and gentle light *, There are ſuch calm and ſerene ideas of truth, that ſhine only in compoſed ſouls, and cannot be diſcerned by any troubled or fluid fancy, that neceſſarily prove *ſome permanent and ſtable eſſence* in the ſoul of man, which (as *Simplicius* well obſerves) ariſeth only *from ſome immoveable and unchangeable cauſe which is always the ſame* †. For theſe operations about truth we now ſpeak of, are not any *chronical energies* ‡, as he further expreſſes it, but the true badges of an eternal nature, and ſpeak *a ſameneſs and ſtability* ‖ (as *Plato* is wont to phraſe it) in man's ſoul. Such are the archetypal ideas of juſtice, wiſdom, goodneſs, truth, eternity, omnipotency, and all thoſe either moral, phyſical, or metaphyſical notions, which are either the firſt principles of ſcience, or the ultimate complement and final perfection of it. Theſe we always find to be the ſame, and know that no exorciſms of material mutations have any power over them: tho' we ourſelves are but of yeſterday, and mutable every moment, yet theſe are eternal, and depend not upon any mundane viciſſitudes; neither could we ever gather them from our obſervation of any material thing, where they were never ſown.

If we reflect but upon our own ſouls, how manifeſtly do the ſpecies of reaſon, freedom, perception, and the like, offer themſelves to us, whereby we may know a thouſand times more diſtinctly what our ſouls are than what our bodies are? For the former we know by an immediate converſe with ourſelves, and a diſtinct ſenſe of their operations; whereas all our knowledge of the body is little better than merely hiſtorical, which we imperfectly

* μόνιμον ϗ ϛάσιμόν τι, ἀπὸ ἀκινήτυ τινὸς, ϗ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον ἀμεταβλήτυ αἰτίας, τῆς ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ϗ ὡσαύτως ἐχούσης. *Simplic. ad Epictet.*

† χρονικαὶ ἐνέργειαι.

‡ ταυτότης καὶ ϛάσις.

imperfectly collect from more doubtful and uncertain experiments which we make of them: but the notions which we have of a mind, *i. e.* ſomething within us that thinks, apprehends, reaſons, and diſcourſes, are ſo clear and diſtinct from all thoſe notions which we can faſten upon a body, that we can eaſily conceive, that if all body-being in the world were deſtroyed, yet we might then as well ſubſiſt as now we do. For whenſoever we take notice of thoſe immediate motions of our own minds, whereby they make themſelves known to us, we find no ſuch thing in them as that extenſion or diviſibility, which are contained in every corporeal eſſence: and having no ſuch thing diſcovered to us from our neareſt familiarity with our own ſouls, we could never ſo eaſily know whether they had any ſuch things as bodies joined to them or not, did not thoſe extrinſical impreſſions that their turbulent motions make upon them admoniſh them thereof.

But, as the more we reflect upon our own minds, we find all intelligible things more clear, (as when we look up to the heavens, we ſee all things more bright and radiant, than when we look down upon this dark earth when the ſun-beams are withdrawn from it:) ſo, when we ſee all intelligible being concentring together in a greater oneneſs, and all kind of multiplicity running more and more into the ſtricteſt unity, till at laſt we find all variety and diviſion abſorbed in a perfect ſimplicity, where all happily conſpire together in the moſt undivided peace and friendſhip; we then eaſily perceive that the reaſon of all diverſity and diſtinction is (that I may uſe *Plotinus* his words not much differently from his meaning, μετάβασις ἀπὸ νῦ εἰς λογισμόν.) For, tho' in our contentious purſuits after ſcience, we caſt wiſdom, power, eternity, goodneſs, and the like, into ſeveral formalities, that ſo we may trace down ſcience in a conſtant chain of deductions; yet, in our naked intuitions and viſions of them, we clearly diſcern that goodneſs and wiſdom lodge together, juſtice and mercy kiſs each other: and all theſe, and whatſoever pieces elſe, into which our reaſons may

ſometime break, divine and intelligible being are faſt knit up together in the invincible bonds of eternity. And in this ſenſe is that notion of *Proclus*, deſcanting upon *Plato*'s riddle of the ſoul, *as if it were generated, and yet not generated* *, to be underſtood; *Time and eternity co-exiſt in the ſoul* †; the ſoul partaking of time in its broken and particular conceptions and apprehenſions, and of eternity in its comprehenſive and ſtable contemplations. I need not ſay that when the ſoul is once got up to the top of this bright *Olympus*, it will then no more doubt of its own immortality, or fear any diſſipation, or doubt whether any drowſy ſleep ſhall hereafter ſeize upon it: no, it will then perceive itſelf in the full and ſafe poſſeſſion of its own immortality, and view itſelf in the horizon of eternity. In ſuch ſober kind of ecſtacies did *Plotinus* find his own ſoul ſeparated from his body, as if it had divorced it for a time from itſelf: *I being often awakened into a ſenſe of myſelf, and being ſequeſtred from my body, and betaking myſelf from all things elſe into myſelf; what admirable beauty did I then behold*‡! Thus is that intelligence begotten which *Proclus* calls *a correction of ſcience:* his notion is worth our taking notice of, and gives us in a manner a brief recapitulation of our former diſcourſe, ſhewing how the higher we aſcend in the contemplation of the ſoul, the higher ſtill we riſe above this low ſphere of ſenſe and matter. His words are theſe, *Science, as it is in the ſoul* (by which he means the diſcourſive power of it) *is blameleſs, but yet is corrected by the mind; as reſolving that which is indiviſible, and dividing ſimple being as if it were compounded: as fancy corrects ſenſe for diſcerning with paſſion and material mixture, from which that purifies its object; opinion corrects fancy, becauſe it apprehends things by forms and phantaſms, which itſelf is above; and ſcience corrects opinion, becauſe it knows without diſcerning of cauſes; and the mind, or the intuitive faculty* corrects

* ὡς γέννητὴ καὶ ἀγέννητος.

† χρόνος ἅμα καὶ αἰὼν περὶ τὴν ψυχήν.

‡ πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος ὡς ἐμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, καὶ γενόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἐμαυτῷ δὲ ἔσω, θαυμασὸν ἠλίκον εἶδον κάλλος. *En.* 4. l. 8. c. 1.

*corrects the ſcientifical, becauſe, by a progreſſive kind of analyſis, it divides the intelligible object, where itſelf knows and ſees things together in their undivided eſſence: wherefore this only is immoveable, and ſcience or ſcientifical reaſon is inferior to it in the knowledge of true being.*

But here we muſt uſe ſome caution, leſt we ſhould arrogate too much to the power of our own ſouls, which indeed cannot raiſe up themſelves into that pure and ſteddy contemplation of true being; but will rather act with ſome multiplicity * attending it. But thus much of its high original may appear to us, that it can correct itſelf, for dividing and disjoining therein, as knowing all to be every way one moſt intire and ſimple: tho' yet all men cannot eaſily improve their own underſtandings to this high degree of comprehenſion; and therefore all antient philoſophers, and *Ariſtotle* himſelf, made it the peculiar privilege of ſome men more abſtracted from themſelves and all corporeal commerce.

## CHAP. VII.

AND now, that we may conclude the argument in hand, we ſhall add but this one thing further to clear the ſoul's immortality, and it is indeed that which breeds a true ſenſe of it, *viz. True and real goodneſs.* Our higheſt ſpeculations of the ſoul may beget a ſufficient conviction thereof within us; but yet it is only true goodneſs and virtue in the ſouls of men that can make them both know and love, believe and delight themſelves in their own immortality. Tho' every good man is not ſo logically ſubtile as to be able by fit mediums to demonſtrate his own immortality, yet he ſees it in a higher light: his ſoul being purged and enlightened by true ſanctity, is more capable of thoſe divine irradiations, whereby it finds itſelf in conjunction with God, and the light of divine goodneſs mixing itſelf with the light of its own reaſon †, ſees more clearly not only



* Or ἑτερότης (as they ſpeak.)

† by a συνάυγεια, as the Greeks ſpeak.

that it may, if it pleaſe the ſupreme Deity, of its own nature exiſt eternally, but alſo that it ſhall do ſo: it knows it ſhall never be deſerted of that free goodneſs which always embraceth it; it knows that Almighty love, which it lives by, to be ſtronger than death, and more powerful than the grave; it will not ſuffer thoſe holy ones that are partakers of it to ly in hell, or their ſouls to ſee corruption; and, tho' worms may devour their fleſh, and putrefaction enter into thoſe bones that fence it, yet it knows that its Redeemer lives, and that it ſhall at laſt ſee him with a pure intellectual eye, which will then be clear and bright, when all that earthly duſt, which converſe with this mortal body filled it with, ſhall be removed; it knows that God will never forſake his own life which he hath quickened in it; he will never deny thoſe ardent deſires of a bliſsful fruition of himſelf, which the lively ſenſe of his own goodneſs hath excited within it: thoſe breathings and pantings after an eternal participation of him, are but the energy of his own breath within us; if he had had any mind to deſtroy it, he would never have ſhewn it ſuch things as he hath done; he would not raiſe it up to ſuch mounts of viſion, to ſhew it all the glory of that heavenly *Canaan* flowing with eternal and unbounded pleaſures, and then precipitate it again into that deep and darkeſt abyſs of death and non-entity. Divine goodneſs cannot, it will not, be ſo cruel to holy ſouls that are ſuch ambitious ſuitors for his love. The more they contemplate the bliſsful effluxes of his divine love upon themſelves, the more they find themſelves ſtrengthened with an undaunted confidence in him; und look not upon themſelves in theſe poor bodily relations and dependences, but in their eternal alliances, as the ſons of God *, who is the father of ſouls, ſouls that are able to live any where in this ſpacious univerſe, and better out of this dark and loneſome cell of bodily matter, which is always checking and clogging them in their noble motions, than in it: as knowing, that when they leave this body, they ſhall then be received into everlaſting

* ὡς κόσμιοι, ὡς υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, as *Arrianus* ſometimes ſpeaks.

lasting habitations, and converse freely and familiarly with that source of life and spirit which they conversed with in this life in a poor disturbed and straitened manner. It is indeed nothing else that makes men question the immortality of their souls, so much as their own base and earthly loves, which first makes them wish their souls were not immortal, and then to think they are not: which *Plotinus* hath well observed, and accordingly hath soberly pursued this argument.

I cannot omit a large recital of his discourse, which tends so much to disparage that inanimated philosophy which these later ages have brought forth; as also those heavy-spirited Christians who find so little divine life and activity in their own souls, as to imagine them to fall into such a dead sleep as soon as they leave this earthly tabernacle, that they cannot be awakened again till that last trumpet and the voice of an archangel shall rouse them up. Our author's discourse is this, having first premised this principle, That every divine thing is immortal. "Let us now consider a soul, "not such an one as is immerst into the body, having "contracted unreasonable concupiscence and anger and "other passions, but such an one as hath cast away "these, and as little as may be communicates with "the body: such a one as this will sufficiently manifest "that all vice is unnatural to the soul, and something "acquired only from abroad; and that the best wisdom "and all other virtues lodge in a soul, as being allied "to it. If therefore such a soul shall reflect upon itself, "how shall it not appear to itself to be of such a kind of "nature as divine and eternal essences are? for wisdom "and true virtue being divine effluxes can never enter "into any unhallowed and mortal thing: it must "therefore needs be divine, seeing it is filled with a "divine nature by its kindred and consanguinity there-"with. Whoever therefore amongst us is such a one, "differs but little in his soul from angelical essences; "and that little is the present inhabitation in the body, "in which he is inferior to them. And if every man "were of this raised temper, or any considerable num-"ber had but such holy souls, there would be no such

" infidels as would in any ſort diſbelieve the ſoul's im-
" mortality. But now the vulgar ſort of men, be-
" holding the ſouls of the generality ſo mutilated and
" deformed with vice and wickedneſs, they cannot
" think of the ſoul as of any divine and immortal
" being; tho' indeed they ought to judge of things as
" they are in their own naked eſſences, and not with
" reſpect to that which extra-eſſentially adheres to them;
" which is a great prejudice to knowledge. Contem-
" plate therefore the ſoul of man, diveſting it of all that
" which itſelf is not, or let him that does this view his own
" ſoul; then he will believe it to be immortal, when
" he ſhall behold it fixt in an intelligible and pure na-
" ture; he ſhall then behold his own intellect contem-
" plating, not any ſenſible thing, but eternal things,
" that which is eternal, that is, with itſelf, looking
" into the intellectual world, being itſelf made all
" lucid, intellectual, and ſhining with the ſun-beams of
" eternal truth, borrowed from the firſt good, which
" perpetually rayeth forth his truth upon all intellectual
" beings. One thus qualified may ſeem, without any
" arrogance, to take up that ſaying of *Empedocles*.
" Farewell all earthly allies, I am henceforth no mor-
" tal being, but an immortal angel, aſcending up into
" divinity, and reflecting upon that likeneſs of it which
" I find in myſelf. When true ſanctity and purity ſhall
" ground him in the knowledge of divine things, then
" ſhall the inward ſciences, that ariſe from the bottom
" of his own ſoul, diſplay themſelves; which indeed
" are the only true ſciences: for the ſoul runs not out
" of itſelf to behold temperance and juſtice abroad, but
" its own light ſees them in the contemplation of its
" own being, and that divine eſſence which was before
" enſhrined within itſelf *."

I

* λάβωμεν δὲ ψυχὴν, μὴ τὴν ἐν τῷ σώματι ἐπιθυμίας ἀλόγους
καὶ θυμοὺς προσλαβοῦσαν, καὶ πάθη ἄλλα ἀναδεξαμένην, ἀλλὰ τὴν ταῦ-
τα ἀποτριψαμένην, καὶ καθόσον οἷόν τε μὴ κοινωνοῦσαν τῷ σώματι·
ἥτις καὶ δῆλον ποιεῖ ὡς προσθῆ καὶ τὰ κακὰ τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ ἀλλοθεν. κα-
θηραμένη δὲ αὐτὴ, ἐν ὑπάρχει τὰ ἄριστα φρόνησις, καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ἀρετὴ
οἰκεῖα ὄντα. εἰ ὧν τοιοῦτον ἡ ψυχὴ ὅταν εφ' ἑαυτὴν ἀνέλθη, τῆς ὑ τῆς
φύσεως ἐκείνης, ὅταν φαμὲν τὴν τῦ θέου καὶ ἀΐδιον παντὸς εἶναι φρόνησις

γὰρ

I might after all this add many more reaſons for a further confirmation of this preſent propoſition, which are as numerous as the ſoul's relations and productions themſelves are; but to every one who is willing to do his own ſoul right, the evidence which we have already brought in is more than ſufficient.

## CHAP.

γὰρ ἡ ἀρετὴ ἀληθὴς θεῖα οὖσα, οὐκ ἂν ἐγγένοιτο φαύλῳ τινὶ καὶ θνητῷ πράγματι, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη θεῖον τὸ τοιοῦτον εἶναι, ἅτε θείων μέσον αὐλῳ διὰ συγγένειαν, καὶ τὸ ὁμοούσιον. διὰ δὴ ὅσις τοιοῦτος ἡμῶν, ὀλίγον ἂν παραλάθοι τῶν ἄνω τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῇ. μόνον τοῦτο, ὅσον ἐσὶν ἐν σώματι ἐλλαμπόμενος. διο, καὶ εἰ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος τοιοῦτος ἦν, ἢ πλῆθος τὶ τοιαύταις ψυχαῖς κεχρημένον, οὐδεὶς οὕτως ἦν ἄπιστος, ὡς μὴ πιστευέιν τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῖς πάντη ἀθάνατον εἶναι. νῦν δ' πολλαχοῦ λελωβημένην τὴν ἐν τοῖς πλείοσις ψυχὴν ὁρῶντες, οὔτε ὡς περὶ θείου, οὔτε ὡς περὶ ἀθανάτου χρήματος διανοοῦνται. δεῖ δ' τὴν φύσιν ἑκάστου σκοπεῖσθαι, εἰς τὸ καθαρὸν αὐτοῦ ἀφορῶντα ἐπείπερ τὸ προσθὲν, ἐμπόδιον αἰεὶ πρὸς γνῶσιν τοῦ ᾧ προσετέθη γίγνεσθαι. σκόπει δὴ ἀφελὼν, μᾶλλον δὲ ὁ ἀφελὼν ἑαυτὸν ἰδέτω, καὶ πιστεύσει ἀθάνατος εἶναι, ὅταν ἑαυτὸν θεάσηται ἐν τῷ νοητῷ, καὶ ἐν τῷ καθαρῷ γεγενημένον. ὄψεται γὰρ νῦν ὁρῶντα οὐκ αἰσθητόν τι, οὐδὲ θνητῶν τύπων, ἀλλ' αἰδίῳ τὸ αἰδιον κατανοοῦντα, πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ νοητῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ αὐτὸν νοητὸν καὶ φαεινὸν γεγενημένον, ἀληθείᾳ καταλαμπόμενον, τῇ παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὃ πᾶσιν ἐπιλάμπει τοῖς νοητοῖς ἀλήθειαν. ὡς πολλάκις αὐτῷ δόξαι τοῦτο δὴ καλῶς εἰρήσθαι.

χαίρετ' ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος ——

πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀναβὰς, καὶ τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸ ὁμοιότητα ἀτενίσας. εἰ δ' ἡ κάθαρσις ποῦ ἐν γνώσει τῶν ἀρίστων εἶναι, καὶ αἱ ἐπισῆμαι ἔνδον ὅσαι ἀναφαίνονται; ἆρ δὴ καὶ ὄντως ἐπισῆμαι εἰσὶν; ὑ γὰρ δὴ ἐξὼ πᾶ δραμοῦσα ἡ ψυχὴ, σωφροσύνην καθαρὰν καὶ δικαιοσύνην, ἀλλ' αὐτὴ παρ' αὐτῇ ἐν τῇ καπανοήσει ἑαυτῆς, καὶ τῷ ὃ πρότερον ἦν, ὥσπερ ἀγάλματα ἐν αὐτῇ ἱδρυμένα ὁρῶσα. *Plotin. Enn. 4. lib. 7. c. 10.*

## CHAP. VIII.

WE have now done with the confirmation of this point, which is the main baſis of all religion, and ſhall not at preſent trouble ourſelves with thoſe difficulties that may ſeem to incumber it; which indeed are only ſuch as beg for a ſolution, but do not, if they be impartially conſidered, proudly conteſt with it: and ſuch of them which depend upon any hypotheſis which we may apprehend to be laid down in Scripture, I cannot think them to be of any ſuch moment, but that any one who deals freely and ingenuouſly with this portion of God's truth, may from thence find a far better method of anſwering, than he can of moving any ſcruples againſt the ſoul's immortality, which that moſt ſtrongly every where ſuppoſes, and does not ſo poſitively lay down, as preſume that we have any antecedent knowledge of it, and therefore principally teaches us the right way and method of providing in this life for our happy ſubſiſtence in that eternal ſtate. And as for what pretends to reaſon or experience, I think it may not be amiſs briefly to ſearch into one main difficulty concerning the ſoul's immortality: and that is, that ſtrange kind of dependency which it ſeems to have on the body, whereby it ſeems conſtantly to comply and ſympathize therewith, and to aſſume to itſelf the frailties and infirmities thereof, to thrive and languiſh as it were together with that: and ſo when the body is compoſed to reſt, our ſoul ſeems to ſleep together with it; and as the ſpring of bodily motion ſeated in our brain is more clear or muddy, ſo the conceptions of our minds are more diſtinct or diſturbed.

To anſwer this difficulty, it might be enough perhaps to ſay, that the ſympathy of things is no ſufficient argument to prove the identity of their eſſences by, as I think all will grant; yet we ſhall endeavour more fully to ſolve it.

And for that purpoſe we muſt take notice, that tho' our ſouls be of an incorporeal nature, as we have already

ready demonſtrated, yet they are united to our bodies, not as aſſiſting forms or intelligences, as ſome have thought, but in ſome more immediate way; tho' we cannot tell what that is, it being the great undiſcoverable ſecret in man's nature *. But indeed to make ſuch a complex thing as man is, it was neceſſary that the ſoul ſhould be ſo united to the body, as to ſhare in its paſſions and infirmities ſo far as they are void of ſinfulneſs. And as the body alone could not perform any act of ſenſation or reaſon, ſo neither would the ſoul be capable of providing for the neceſſities of the body, without ſome way whereby a feeling and ſenſe of them might be conveyed to it; neither could it take ſufficient care of this corporeal life, as nothing pertaining to it, were it not ſollicited to a natural compaſſion by the indigencies of our bodies. It cannot be a mere mental ſpeculation that would be ſo ſenſibly affected with hunger or cold, or other griefs of which our bodies neceſſarily partake, as to move our ſouls to provide for their relief: and were there not ſuch a commerce between our ſouls and bodies, as that our ſouls alſo might be made acquainted by a pleaſurable and delightful ſenſe of thoſe things that moſt gratify our bodies, and tend moſt to the ſupport of their temperament; the ſoul would be apt wholly to neglect the body, and commit it wholly to all changes and caſualties. Neither would it be any thing more to us than the body of a plant or ſtar, which we contemplate ſometimes with as much contentment as we do our own bodies, having as much of the theory of the one as of the other. And the relation that our ſouls bear to ſuch peculiar bodies as they inhabit, is one and the ſame in point of notion and ſpeculation with that which they have to any other body: and therefore that which determines the ſoul to this body more than that, muſt be ſome ſubtile tye that unites it to it in a more phyſical way, which therefore

* That it was which troubled *Plotinus* ſo much, when he had contemplated the immortality of it, that, as he ſpeaks of himſelf, *Enn.* 4. *lib.* 8. *c.* 1. εἰς λογισμὸν ἐκ νῦ καταβὰς, ἀπορῶ πῶς ποτὲ ἐν νῦν καταβαίνω, ἢ ὅπως ποτέ μοι ἔνδον ἡ ψυχὴ γεγένηται τῷ σώματος, τοῦτο ὃν α ὁιον ἐφάνη καθ' ἑαυτὴν, ἢ περ ὄσα ἐν σώματι.

fore *Proclus* ſometimes calls *a ſpiritual kind of vehicle* *, whereby corporeal impreſſions are transferred to the mind, and the dictates and decrees of that are carried back again into the body to act and move it. *Heraclitus* wittily glancing at theſe mutual aſpects and intercourſes, calls them the reſponſals wherein each of them catches at the other's part, and keeps time with it †; and ſo he tells us that there is *a way that leads upwards and downwards between the ſoul and body* ‡, whereby their affairs are made known to one another. For as the ſoul could not have a ſufficient relation of the ſtate and condition of our bodies, except it received ſome impreſſions from them; ſo neither could our ſouls make uſe of our bodies, or derive their own virtue into them as they do, without ſome intermediate motions. For as ſome motions may ſeem to have their beginning in our bodies, or in ſome external mover, which are not known by our ſouls till their advertency be awakened by the impetuouſneſs of them: ſo ſome other motions are derived by our own wills into our bodies, but yet in ſuch a way as they cannot be into any other body; for we cannot by the mere magical virtue of our wills move any thing elſe without ourſelves, nor follow any ſuch virtue by a concurrent ſenſe of thoſe mutations that are made by it, as we do in our own bodies.

And as this conjugal affection and ſympathy between ſoul and body are thus neceſſary to the being of mankind; ſo we may further take notice of ſome peculiar part within us where all this firſt begins: which a late ſagacious philoſopher hath happily obſerved to be in that part of the brain from whence all thoſe nerves that conduct the animal ſpirits up and down the body take their firſt original; ſeeing we find all motions that firſt ariſe in our bodies, to direct their courſe ſtraight up to that, as continually reſpecting it, and there only to be ſenſated, aud all the imperate motions of our wills iſ-

ſuing

* πνευματικὸν ὄχημα τῆς ψυχῆς.

† ἀμοιβὰς ἀναγκαίας ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων, *Plotin. Enn.* 4. *l.* c. 1.

‡ ὁδὸς ἄνω καὶ κάτω.

ſuing forth from the ſame conſiſtory. Therefore the animal ſpirits, by reaſon of their conſtant mobility and ſwift motion, aſcending to the place of our nerves origination, move the ſoul, which there ſits enthroned, in ſome myſterious way; and deſcending at the beck of our wills from thence, move all the muſcles and joints in ſuch ſort as they are guided and directed by the ſoul. And if we obſerve the ſubtile mechaniſm of our own bodies, we may eaſily conceive how the leaſt motion in theſe animal ſpirits will, by their relaxing or diſtending the nerves, membranes and muſcles, according to their different quantity or the celerity and quality of their motions, beget all kind of motions likeways in the organical part of our bodies. And therefore that our ſouls may the better inform our bodies, they muſt perceive all their varieties; and becauſe they have ſuch an immediate proximity to theſe ſpirits, therefore alſo all the motions of our ſouls in the higheſt way of reaſon and underſtanding are apt to ſtir theſe quick and nimble ſpirits always attending upon them, or elſe fix them too much. And thus we may eaſily ſee, that ſhould our ſouls be always acting and working within us, our bodies could never take that reſt and repoſe which is requiſite for the conſervation of nature. As we may eaſily perceive in all our ſtudies and meditations that are moſt ſerious, our ſpirits are more fixed, attending the beck of our minds. And except this knot whereby our ſouls are wedded to our bodies were unlooſed that our ſouls were looſe from them, they could not act, but preſently ſome motion or other would be impreſſed upon our bodies: as every motion in our bodies that is extraordinary, when our nerves are diſtended with the animal ſpirits, by a continual communication of itſelf in theſe nerves like ſo many intended chords to their original, moves our ſouls; and ſo tho' we always perceive that one of them is primarily affected, yet we alſo find the other preſently by conſent to be affected too.

And becauſe the ſoul hath all corporeal paſſions and impreſſions thus conveyed to it, without which it could not expreſs a due benevolence to that body which peculiarly

culiarly belongs to it; therefore as the motions of theſe animal ſpirits are more or leſs either diſorderly and confuſed, or gentle and compoſed, ſo thoſe ſouls eſpecially who have not by the exerciſe of true virtue got the dominion over them, are alſo more or leſs affected proportionably in their operations. And therefore indeed to queſtion whether the ſoul, that is of an immortal nature, ſhould entertain theſe corporeal paſſions, is to doubt whether God could make a man or not, and to queſtion that which we find by experience in ourſelves; for we find both that it doth thus, and yet that the original of theſe is ſometimes from bodies, and ſometimes again by the force of our wills they are impreſſed upon our bodies.

Here by the way we may conſider in a moral way what to judge of thoſe impreſſions that are derived from our bodies to our ſouls, which the Stoicks call *irrational paſſions* *, not becauſe they are repugnant to reaſon, or are aberrations from it, but becauſe they derive not their original from reaſon, but from the body, which is *ſomething irrational* †, and are by *Ariſtotle*, more agreeably to the antient dialect, called *material* or *corporeal ideas* or *impreſſions* ‡. And theſe we may ſafely reckon, I think, amongſt our *indifferent things* in morality, as being in themſelves neither good nor evil, (as all the antient writers have done) but only are formed into either by that ſtamp that the ſoul prints upon them, when they come to be entertained into it. And therefore whereas ſome are apt, in the moſt ſevere way, to cenſure all thoſe commotions and paſſions that firſt affect our ſouls ‖; they might do well in more cautiouſly diſtinguiſhing between ſuch of theſe motions as have their origination in our bodies, and ſuch as immediately ariſe from our ſouls; elſe may we not too haſtily diſplace the antient boundaries, and remove the landmarks of virtue and vice: for ſeeing the ſoul could not deſcend into any corporeal act, as it muſt do while it is more preſent to one body than another, except it could partake

* ἄλογα πάθη.
† ἄλογόν τι.
‡ ἔνυλοι λόγοι.
‖ τὰς πρώτας κατὰ φύσιν ὁρμὰς.

partake of the griefs and pleaſures of the body; can it be any more ſinful for it to feel this, than it is for it to be united to the body? If our ſouls could not know what it is to eat or drink, but only by a mere ratiocination, collecting by a dry ſyllogiſtical diſcourſe (that meats and drinks preſerve the health and fabrick of the body, repairing what daily exhales from it) without feeling any kind of grief in the want, or refreſhment in the uſe of them; it would ſoon ſuffer the body to languiſh and decay. And therefore as theſe bodily infirmities and paſſions are not evil in themſelves; ſo neither are they evil, as they firſt affect our ſouls. When our animal ſpirits, begot of fine and good blood, gently and nimbly play up and down in our brains, and ſwiftly fly up and down our whole bodies, we preſently find our fancies raiſed with mirth and chearfulneſs: and as when our fancies are thus exalted, we may not call this the energy of grace; ſo if our ſpleen ſwelling with earthly and ſluggiſh vapours, ſend up ſuch melancholic fumes into our heads as move us to ſadneſs and timorouſneſs, we cannot juſtly call that vice; nor when the the gall pours forth its bitter juice into our liver, which mingling itſelf with the blood, begets fiery ſpirits that preſently fly up into our brain, and there beget impreſſions of anger within us. The like we may ſay of thoſe corporeal paſſions which are not bred firſt of all by any peccant humours or diſtemperatures in our own bodies, but are excited in us by any external objects, which by thoſe images that they preſent to our ſenſes, or rather thoſe motions they make in them, may preſently raiſe ſuch commotions in our ſpirits: for our body maintains not only a conſpiration and conſent of all its own parts, but alſo it bears a like relation to other mundane bodies with which it is converſant, as being a part of the whole univerſe. But when our ſoul, once moved by the undiſciplined petulancy of our animal ſpirits, ſhall foment and cheriſh that irrational grief, fear, anger, love, or any ſuch like paſſions, contrary to the dictates of reaſon; it then ſets the ſtamp of ſinfulneſs upon them. It is the conſent of our own wills that by brooding on them brings forth thoſe hateful ſerpents. For tho' our ſouls be eſpouſed to theſe earthly bodies,

and cannot but in ſome meaſure ſympathize with them, yet hath the ſoul a true dominion of its own acts. It is not the mere paſſion, if we take it in a phyſical ſenſe, but rather ſome inordinate action of our own wills that entertain it: and theſe paſſions cannot force our wills, but we may be able to chaſtiſe and allay all the inordinacy of them by the power of our wills and reaſons: and therefore God hath not made us under the neceſſity of ſin, by making us men ſubject to ſuch infirmities as theſe are, which are merely *the bloſſomings and ſhootings forth of bodily life within us* *; which is but *humanity* †.

And, if I miſtake not, our Divinity is wont ſometimes to acknowledge ſome ſuch thing in our Saviour himſelf, who was in all things made like to us, our ſinfulneſs excepted. He was *a man of ſorrows and acquainted with griefs*, as the Prophet *Eſay* ſpeaks of him, liii. 3. and when he was in bodily agonies and horrors, the powerful aſſaults thereof upon his ſoul moved him to petition his Father, That, *if it were poſſible, that* bitter *cup might paſs from him*, *Math.* xxvi. 39. and the ſenſe of death ſo much afflicted him, that it bred in him the ſad griefs which St. *Peter* expreſſeth by the pangs or throws of death, *Acts* ii. 24. and that fear that extorted a deſire to be freed from it, as is inſinuated by that in *Heb.* v. 7. he was delivered from what he feared ‡. And we are wont to call this the language and dictate of nature, which lawfully endeavours to preſerve itſelf, tho' preſently an higher principle muſt bring all theſe under a ſubjection to God, and a free ſubmiſſion to his good pleaſure: as it was with our Saviour, who moderated all theſe paſſions by a ready reſignment of himſelf and his own will up to the will of God; and tho' his humanity craved for eaſe and relaxation, yet that divine nature that was within him would not have it with any repugnancy to the ſupreme will of God.

A

* ζωαὶ σωμάτων, as the Greek philoſopher hath well called them.

† τὸ ἀνθρώπινον.

‡ For ſo the words being nothing elſe but an Hebraiſm, are to be rendered, εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας.

A

# DISCOURSE

OF

# THE EXISTENCE

AND

# NATURE OF GOD.

# A DISCOURSE OF THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD.

## CHAP. I.

WE ſhall now come to the other cardinal principle of all religion, and treat ſomething concerning God. Where we ſhall not ſo much demonſtrate That he is, as What he is.

Both which we may beſt learn from a reflection upon our own ſouls, as *Plotinus* hath well taught us, *He who reflects upon himſelf, reflects upon his own original* *, and finds the cleareſt impreſſion of ſome eternal nature and perfect being ſtamped upon his own ſoul. And therefore *Plato* ſeems ſometimes to reprove the ruder ſort of men in his times for their contrivance of pictures and images to put themſelves in mind of the angelical beings, and exhorts them to look into their own ſouls, which are the faireſt images not only of the lower divine natures, but of the Deity itſelf; God having ſo copied forth himſelf into the whole life and energy of man's ſoul, as that the lovely characters of divinity may be moſt eaſily ſeen and read of all men within themſelves; as they ſay *Phidias* the famous ſtatuary, after he had made

* εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφων, εἰς ἀρχὴν ἐπιστρέφει.

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made the ſtatue of *Minerva* with the greateſt exquiſiteneſs of art to be ſet up in the *Acropolis* at *Athens*, afterwards impreſſed his own image ſo deeply in her buckler, That it could not be effaced, without impairing the ſtatue itſelf *. And if we would know what the impreſs of ſouls is, it is nothing but God himſelf, who could not engrave his own name ſo as that it might be read, but only in rational natures. Neither could he make ſuch without imparting ſuch an imitation of his own eternal underſtanding to them, as might be a perpetual memorial of himſelf within them. And whenever we look upon our own ſoul in a right manner, we ſhall find an *Urim* and *Thummim* there, by which we may aſk counſel of God himſelf, who will have this always born upon its breaſt-plate.

There is nothing that ſo debaſes and enthrals the ſouls of men, as the diſmal and dreadful thoughts of their own mortality, which will not ſuffer them to look beyond this ſhort ſpan of time, to ſee an hour's length before them, or to look higher than theſe material heavens; which though they could be ſtretched forth to infinity, yet would the ſpace be too narrow for an enlightned mind, that will not be confined within the compaſs of corporeal dimenſions. Theſe black opinions of death and the non-entity of ſouls (darker than hell itſelf) ſhrink up the free-born ſpirit which is within us, which would otherwiſe be dilating and ſpreading itſelf boundleſsly beyond all finite being: and when theſe earth-born miſts are once blown away, it finds this narrow ſphere of being to give way before it; and having once ſeen beyond time and matter, it finds then no more ends nor bounds to ſtop its ſwift and reſtleſs motion. It may then fly upwards from one heaven to another, till it be beyond all orb of finite being, ſwallowed up in the boundleſs abyſs of divinity †, beyond all that which darker thoughts are wont to repreſent under the idea of eſſence. This is that *divine darkneſs* ‡, which

* *Ut nemo delere poſſit aut divellere, qui totam ſtatuam non imminueret.*

† ὑπεράνω τῆς θείας.

‡ θεῖον σκότος, of which the *Areopagite* ſpeaks.

which the higher our minds ſoar into, the more incomprehenſible they find it. Thoſe diſmal apprehenſions which pinion the ſouls of men to mortality, bear down that noble life thereof, which would always be riſing upwards, and ſpread itſelf in a free heaven: and when once the ſoul hath ſhaken off theſe apprehenſions, when it is once able to look through a grave, and ſee beyond death, it finds a vaſt immenſity of being opening itſelf more and more before it, and the inexpreſſible light and beauty thereof ſhining more and more into it; when it can reſt and bear up itſelf upon an immaterial centre of immortality within, it will then find itſelf able to bear itſelf away by a ſelf-reflexion into the contemplation of an eternal Deity.

For though God hath copied forth his own perfections in this viſible and ſenſible world, according as it is capable of entertaining them; yet the moſt clear and diſtinct copy of himſelf could be imparted to none elſe but to intelligible and inviſible natures: and though the whole fabrick of this viſible univerſe be whiſpering out the notions of a Deity, and always inculcates this leſſon to the contemplators of it, *God created me* *, as *Plotinus* expreſſeth it; yet we cannot underſtand it without ſome interpreter within. *The heavens* indeed *declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſhews his handy-work*, Pſal. xix. 1. *And that which may be known of God*, even *his eternal power and godhead*, as St. *Paul* tells us, Rom. i. 20. is to be ſeen in theſe external appearances: yet it muſt be ſomething within that muſt inſtruct us in all theſe myſteries, and we ſhall then beſt underſtand them, when we compare that copy which we find of them within ourſelves, with that which we ſee without us. The ſchoolmen have well compared ſenſible and intelligible beings in reference to the Deity, when they tell us that the one do only repreſent *the foot-ſteps of divinity*, the other *the face of divinity*. We ſhall therefore here inquire what that knowledge of a Deity is into which a due converſe with our own naked underſtandings will lead.

CHAP.

* ὡς ἐμὲ πεποίηκε ὁ θεός.

## CHAP. II.

IT being our deſign to diſcourſe more particularly of that knowledge of the Deity that we may learn immediately from ourſelves, we ſhall obſerve,

*Firſt*, There is nothing whereby our own ſouls are better known to us than by the properties and operations of reaſon: but when we reflect upon our own idea of pure and perfect reaſon, we know that our own ſouls are not it, but only partake of it; and that it is of ſuch a nature, that we cannot denominate any other thing of the ſame rank with ourſelves by; and yet we know certainly that it is, as finding from an inward ſenſe of it within ourſelves, that both we and other things elſe beſide ourſelves partake of it*, neither do we or any finite thing contain the ſource of it within ourſelves: and becauſe we have a diſtinct notion of the moſt perfect mind and underſtanding, we own our deficiency therein. And as that idea of underſtanding which we have within us points not out to us this or that particular, but ſomething which is neither this nor that, but total underſtanding; ſo neither will any elevation of it ſerve every way to fit and anſwer that idea. And therefore when we find that we cannot attain to ſcience but by a diſcurſive deduction of one thing from another, that our knowledge is confined, and is not fully adequate and commenſurate to the largeſt ſphere of being, it not running quite through it, nor filling the whole area of it; or that our knowledge is chronical and ſucceſſive, and cannot graſp all things at once, but works by intervals, and runs out into diviſion and multiplicity; we know all this is for want of reaſon and underſtanding, and that a pure and ſimple mind and intellect is free from all theſe reſtraints and imperfections, and therefore can be no leſs then infinite. As this idea which we have of it in our own ſouls will not ſuffer us to

* That we have it κατὰ μέθεξιν and not κατ' οὐσίαν.

to reſt in any conception thereof which repreſents it leſs than infinite: ſo neither will it ſuffer us to conceive of it any otherwiſe than as one ſimple being: and could we multiply underſtandings into never ſo vaſt a number, yet ſhould we be again collecting and knitting them up together in ſome univerſal one. So that if we rightly reflect upon our own minds and the method of their energies, we ſhall find them to be ſo framed, as not to admit of any other than one infinite ſource of all that reaſon and underſtanding which themſelves partake of, in which they live, move, and have their being. And therefore in the old metaphyſical theology, an original and uncreated unity is made the fountain of all particularities and numbers which have their exiſtence from the efflux of its almighty power.

And that is the next thing which our own underſtandings will inſtruct us in concerning God, *viz.* His eternal power. For as we find a will and power within ourſelves to execute the reſults of our own reaſon and judgment, ſo far as we are not hindered by ſome more potent cauſe: ſo indeed we know it muſt be a mighty inward ſtrength and force that muſt enable our underſtandings to their proper functions, and that life, energy and activity can never be ſeparated from a power of underſtanding. The more unbodied any thing is, the more unbounded alſo is it in its effective power: body and matter being the moſt ſluggiſh, and unwieldy thing that may be, having no power from itſelf nor over itſelf: and therefore the pureſt mind, muſt alſo needs be the moſt almighty life and ſpirit; and as it comprehends all things and ſums them up together in its infinite knowledge, ſo it muſt alſo comprehend them all in its own life and power. Beſides, when we review our own immortal ſouls and their dependency upon ſome almighty mind, we know that we neither did nor could produce ourſelves; and withal know that all that power which lies within the compaſs of ourſelves, will ſerve for no other purpoſe than to apply ſeveral pre-exiſtent things one to another, from whence all generations and mutations ariſe, which are nothing elſe but the events of different applications and complications.

tions of bodies that were existent before : and therefore that which produced that substantial life and mind by which we know ourselves, must be something much more mighty than we are, and can be no less indeed than omnipotent, and must also be the first architect of all other beings, and the perpetual supporter of them.

We may also know from the same principles, that an almighty love, every way commensurate to that most perfect being, eternally rests in it, which is as strong as that is infinite, and as full of life and vigour as that is of perfection. And because it finds no beauty nor loveliness but only in that and the issues thereof, therefore it never does nor can fasten upon any thing else. And therefore the divinity always enjoys itself and its own infinite perfections, seeing it is that eternal and stable sun of goodness which neither rises nor sets, is neither eclipsed nor can receive any increase of light and beauty. Hence the divine love is never attended with those turbulent passions, perturbations, or wrestlings within itself, of fear, desire, grief, anger, or any such like, whereby our love is wont to explicate and unfold its affection towards its object. But as the divine love is perpetually most infinitely ardent and potent, so it is always calm and serene, unchangeable, having no such ebbings and flowings, no such diversity of stations and retrogradations as that love hath in us, which ariseth from the weakness of our understandings, that do not present things to us always in the same orient lustre and beauty : neither we nor any other worldly thing are always the same. Besides, though our love may sometimes transport us and violently rend us from ourselves and from all self-enjoyment, yet the more forcible it is, by so much the more it will be apt to torment us, while it cannot centre itself in that which it so strongly endeavours to attract to it ; and when it possesseth most, yet it is always hungry and craving, as *Plotinus* hath well expressed it, It may always be filling itself, but, like a leaking vessel, it will be always emptying itself again *. Whereas the infinite ardour of the divine love, arising

* πάντοτε πληρῦται, καὶ πάντοτε ἐκρεῖ.

ariſing from the unbounded perfection of the divine Being, always reſts ſatisfied within itſelf, and ſo may rather be defined by a στάσις, than a κίνησις, and reſts in the ſame central unity in which it firſt begins. And therefore I think ſome men of later times have much miſtaken the nature of the divine love, in imagining that love is attributed to God, as all other paſſions are, rather as to its conſequences than as to its nature: whereas St. *John*, who was well acquainted with this noble ſpirit of love, when he defined God by it, and calls him LOVE, meant not to ſignify a bare nothing known by ſome effects, but that which was infinitely ſuch as it ſeems to be. And we might well ſpare our labour, when we ſo induſtriouſly endeavour to find ſomething in God that might produce the effects of ſome other paſſions in us, which look rather like the brood of hell and darkneſs, than the lovely offspring of heaven.

When we reflect upon all this which ſignifies ſome perfect eſſence, as a mind, wiſdom, underſtanding, omnipotency, goodneſs, and the like, we can find no ſuch thing as time or place, or any corporeal or finite properties, which ariſe indeed not from the fulneſs, but ſcantineſs of being; we may alſo know God to be eternal and omnipreſent, not becauſe he fills either place or time, but rather becauſe he wanteth neither. That which firſt begets the notion of time in us, is nothing elſe but that ſucceſſion and multiplicity which we find in our own thoughts, which move from one thing to another, as the ſun in the firmament is ſaid to walk from one planetary houſe to another, and to have his ſeveral ſtages to paſs by. And therefore where there is no ſuch viciſſitude or variety, as there can be no ſenſe of time, ſo there can be nothing of the thing. *Proclus* hath wittily obſerved, that *Saturn*, or (as the Greeks called him) *Chronus* or *Time*, was the firſt of the terreſtrial gods *, becauſe time is neceſſarily preſuppoſed to all generations †, which proceeds by certain motions and

* Θεοὶ ἐπίκοσμιοι.

† ὅτι ὅπου γένεσις, ἐκεῖ προηγεῖται χρόνος.

and intervals. This world is indeed a great horologe to itſelf, and is continually numbering out its own age; but it cannot lay any ſure hold upon its own paſt revolutions, nor can it join its infancy and old age, and combine them together. Whereas an infinitely comprehenſive mind hath a ſimultaneous poſſeſſion of its own unchangeable life; and becauſe it finds no ſucceſſion in its own immutable underſtanding, therefore it cannot find any thing to meaſure out its own duration. And as time lies in the baſis of all finite life, whereby it is enabled by degrees to diſplay all the virtue of its own eſſence, which it cannot do at once; ſo ſuch an eternity lies at the foundation of the divinity, whereby it becomes one *without any ſhadow of turning*, as St. *James* ſpeaks, *Jam.* i. 17. without any variety or multiplicity within himſelf, of which all created beings, that are carried down the current of time, partake. And therefore the *Platoniſts* were wont to attribute eternity to God, not ſo much becauſe he had neither beginning nor end of days, but becauſe of his immutable and uniform nature, which admits of no ſuch variety of conceptions as all temporary things do: and time they attributed to all created beings, becauſe there is a conſtant generation both of their eſſence and in their eſſence, by reaſon whereof we may call any of them *old and new**, being every moment as it were re-produced, and acting ſomething which it did not individually before. Tho' otherways they ſuppoſed that this world, conſtantly depending upon the Creator's omnipotency, might from all eternity flow forth from the ſame power that ſtill ſuſtains it, and which was never leſs potent to uphold it than now it is: notwithſtanding that they acknowledged this piece of it which is viſible to us, or at leaſt this ſcheme or faſhion of it, to be of a late date.

Now thus as we conceive of God's eternity, we may in a correſpondant manner apprehend his omnipreſence; *not ſo much by an infinite extenſion of eſſence, as by an*

* As *Proclus* tells us, by that borrowed expreſſion, ἕνν ὁ νέον.

*an unlimited power* *. For as nothing can ſtray beyond the bounds of an Almighty mind and power, ſo when we barely think of mind or power, or of any thing elſe moſt peculiar to the divine eſſence, we cannot find any of the properties of quantity mixing themſelves with it: and as we cannot confine it in regard thereof to any one point of the univerſe, ſo neither can we well conceive it extended through the whole, or excluded from any part of it. It is always ſome material being that contends for ſpace: bodily parts will not lodge together, and the more bulky they are, the more they juſtle for room one with another; *bodily beings are great only in bulk, but divine eſſences in virtue and power* †.

We may in the next place conſider that freedom and liberty which we find in our own ſouls, which is founded in our reaſon and underſtanding; and this is therefore infinite in God, becauſe there is nothing that can bound the firſt mind, or diſobey an Almighty power. We muſt not conceive God to be the freeſt agent, becauſe he can do and preſcribe what he pleaſeth, and ſo ſet up an abſolute will which ſhall make both law and reaſon, as ſome imagine. For as God cannot know himſelf to be any other than what indeed he is; ſo neither can he will himſelf to be any thing elſe than what he is, or that any thing elſe ſhould ſwerve from thoſe laws which his own eternal nature and underſtanding preſcribe to it. For this were to make God free to dethrone himſelf, and ſet up a liberty within him that ſhould contend with the royal prerogative of his own boundleſs wiſdom.

To be ſhort; when we converſe with our own ſouls, we find the ſpring of all liberty to be nothing elſe but reaſon; and therefore no unreaſonable creature can partake of it: and that it is not ſo much any indifferency in our wills of determining without reaſon, much leſs againſt it, as the liberal election of, and complacency



* λεπτὸν δὲ καὶ ἄπειρον αὐτὸν οὐ τῷ ἀδιεξιτήτῳ ἢ τῷ μεγέθους ἢ τῷ ἀριθμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀπεριλήπτῳ τῆς δυνάμεως. as *Plotinus* hath fitly expreſſed it.

† As *Plotinus* tells us, τὰ μὲν ἐνταῦθα μεγάλα ἐν ὄγκῳ, τὰ δὲ ἐκεῖ ἐν δυνάμει.

cency in, that which our underſtandings propound to us as moſt expedient: and our liberty moſt appears, when our will moſt of all congratulates the reſults of our own judgments; and then ſhews itſelf moſt vigorous, when either the particularneſs of that good, which the underſtanding converſeth with, or the weak knowledge that it hath of it, reſtrains it not. Then is it moſt pregnant and flows forth in the fulleſt ſtream, when its object is moſt full, and the acquaintance with it moſt ample: all liberty in the ſoul being a kind of liberality in the beſtowing of our affections, and the want or ſcarce meaſure of it parſimonioufneſs. And therefore the more the reſults of our judgments tend to an indifferency, the more we find our wills dubious and in ſuſpenſe what to chuſe; contrary inclinations ariſing and falling within interchangeably, as the ſcales of a balance equally laden with weights; and all this while the ſoul's liberty is nothing elſe but a fluctuation between uncertainties, and languiſheth away in the impotency of our underſtandings. Whereas the divine underſtanding beholding all things moſt clearly, muſt needs beget the greateſt freedom that may be; which freedom as it is bred in it, ſo it never moves without the compaſs of it. And tho' the divine will be not determined always to this or that particular, yet it is never bereft of eternal light and truth to act by: and therefore, tho' we cannot ſee a reaſon for all God's actions, yet we may know they were neither done againſt it, nor without it.

## CHAP. III.

WE ſhall once more take a view of our own ſouls, and obſerve how the motions thereof lead us into the knowledge of a Deity. We always find a reſtleſs appetite within ourſelves, which craves for ſome ſupreme and chief good, and will not be ſatisfied with any thing

thing leſs than infinity itſelf: as if our own penury and indigency were commenſurate to the divine fulneſs: and therefore no queſtion has been more canvaſſed by all philoſophy than this, *of the chief good of man*, and all the ſects thereof were antiently diſtinguiſhed by thoſe opinions that they entertained of the limits of good and evil. But of how weak a nature ſoever ſome of them may have conceived that ſupreme good, yet they could not ſo ſatisfy their own inflamed thirſt after it. We find by experience that our ſouls cannot live upon that thin and ſpare diet with which they are entertained at their own home; neither can they be ſatiated with thoſe inſipid morſels with which this outward world furniſheth their table. The moſt voluptuous *Epicurean* could not, I believe, ever ſatisfy the cravings of his ſoul with corporeal pleaſure, tho' he might endeavour to perſuade himſelf that there was no better: nor the moſt refined *Stoics* find a ſelf-ſufficiency and tranquillity within their own ſouls, ariſing out of the pregnancy of their own mind and reaſon; tho' their ſullen thoughts would not ſuffer them to be beholden to an higher being for their happineſs. The more we endeavour to extract an independent dominion out of our own ſouls, the more we torment them, and force them to feel their own pinching poverty. Ever ſince our minds became ſo dim-ſighted as not to pierce into that original and primitive bleſſedneſs which is above, our wills are too big for our underſtandings, and will believe that their beloved prey is to be found where reaſon diſcovers it not: they will purſue it thro' all the vaſt wilderneſs of this world, and force our underſtandings to follow the chaſe with them: nor may we think to tame this violent appetite, or allay the heat of it, except we can look upward to ſome eternal and almighty goodneſs which is alone able to maſter it.

It is not the nimbleneſs and agility of our own reaſon which ſtir up theſe eager affections within us, (for then the moſt ignorant ſort of men would never feel the ſting thereof) but indeed ſome more potent nature which hath planted a reſtleſs motion within us that might more forcibly carry us out to itſelf; and therefore it will ne-

ver ſuffer itſelf to be controuled by any of our thin ſpeculations, or ſatisfied with thoſe airy delights that our fancies may offer to it: it doth not, it cannot, reſt itſelf any where but upon the centre of ſome almighty good, ſome ſolid and ſubſtantial happineſs; like the hungry child that will not be ſtilled by all the mother's muſic, or change its ſour and angry looks for her ſmiling countenance; nothing will ſatisfy it but the deſired nouriſhment.

The whole work of this world is nothing but a perpetual contention for true happineſs, and men are ſcattered up and down the world, moving to and fro therein, to ſeek it. Our ſouls, by a natural ſcience as it were, feeling their own original, are perpetually travelling with new deſigns and contrivances whereby they may attain the purſuits of their high ambitions. Happineſs is that pearl of price which all adventure for, tho' few find it. It is not gold or ſilver that the earthlings of this world ſeek after, but ſome ſatisfying good which they think is there treaſured up. Neither is it a little empty breath that ambition and popularity ſoars after, but ſome kind of happineſs that it thinks to catch and ſuck in with it.

And thus indeed when men moſt of all fly from God, they ſtill ſeek after him. Wicked men purſue indeed after a Deity in their worldly luſts; wherein yet they moſt blaſpheme; for God is not a mere empty name or title, but that ſelf-ſufficient good which brings along that reſt and peace with it, which they ſo much ſeek after, tho' they do moſt prodigiouſly conjoin it with ſomething which it is not, nor can it be, and in a true and real ſtrain of blaſphemy, attribute all that which God is to ſomething elſe which is moſt unlike him, and, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks of thoſe infatuated Gentiles, *turn the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible man, of birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things.* Rom. i. 23.

God is not better defined to us by our underſtandings than by our wills and affections: he is not only the eternal reaſon, that almighty mind and wiſdom with which our underſtandings converſe; but he is alſo that unſtained

unſtained beauty and ſupreme good to which our wills are perpetually aſpiring: and whereſoever we find true beauty, love and goodneſs, we may ſay, Here or there is God. And, as we cannot underſtand any thing of an intelligible nature, but by ſome primitive idea which we have of God, whereby we are able to gueſs at the elevation of its being, and the pitch of its perfection; ſo neither do our wills embrace any thing without ſome latent ſenſe of him, whereby they can taſte and diſcern how near any thing comes to that ſelf-ſufficient good they ſeek after: and indeed without ſuch an internal feeling as this is, we ſhould never know when our ſouls are in conjunction with the Deity, or be able to reliſh the ineffable ſweetneſs of true happineſs. Tho' here below we know but little what this is, becauſe we are little acquainted with enjoyment; we know well what belongs to longing and languiſhment, but we know not ſo well what belongs to plenty and fulneſs; we are well acquainted with the griefs and ſickneſſes of this in-bred love, but we know not what its health and complacencies are.

To conclude this particular, the ſoul hath ſtrong and weighty motions *, and nothing elſe can bear it up but ſomething permanent and immutable. Nothing can beget a conſtant ſerenity and compoſedneſs within, but ſomething ſupreme to its own eſſence; as if having once departed from the primitive fountain of its life, it were deprived of itſelf, perpetually conteſting within itſelf and divided againſt itſelf: and all this evidently proves to our inward ſenſe and feeling, that there is ſome higher good than ourſelves, ſomething that is much more amiable and deſireable, and therefore muſt be loved and preferred before ourſelves, *Every thing that deſires the enjoyment of the firſt good, would rather be that than what it is* †. And therefore the *Platoniſts*, when they contemplate the Deity under theſe three no-



* μεγάλας ἔχει κινήσεις ἡ ψυχή.

† τῶν ὄντων ἕκαστον ἐφιέμενον τῦ ἀγαθῦ, βύλεται ἐκεῖνο μᾶλλον ἢ ὅ ἐστιν εἶναι, as *Plotinus* hath excellently obſerved.

tions, *the one*, *the existing*, and *the good**, and question which to place first in order of understanding, resolve the pre-eminence to be due to *the good*, as *Simplicius* tells us; because that is first known to us as the architect of the world, and, we may add, as that which begets in us strong passionate desires whereby all sorts of men, (even they who are rude and illiterate) are first known to themselves, and, by that knowledge, may know what diminutive, poor and helpless, things themselves are, who can never satiate themselves from themselves, and what an excellent and sovereign goodness there is above them which they ought to serve, and must either serve it, or some filthy idol instead of it; tho' this mental idolatry be like that gross and external in this also, that howsoever we attend it not (and so are never the more blameless) yet our worship of these images and pictures of goodness rests not there, it being some all-sufficient good that calls forth and commands our adorations.

## CHAP. IV.

WE have seen how we may rise up to the understanding of the Deity by the contemplation of our own souls: and now it may seem worthy of the best attention of our minds to consider some deductions and inferences which naturally flow from the true knowledge of the divine nature and attributes.

And the *first* is, *That all divine productions or operations, that terminate in something without him, are nothing else but the free effluxes of his own omnipotent love and goodness*, which always move along with them, and never willingly depart from them. When God made the world, it was not from self-interest, as if he had had any design to advance himself, or to enlarge his own stock of glory and happiness; for what beauty or perfection

* τὸ ἓν, τὸ ὄν, τὸ ἀγαθὸν.

fection can be in this whole creation, which was not before contained in himſelf as the free fountain of all? or what could he ſee out of himſelf that could add any thing to him, or which he found not already in himſelf? He made not the world, *that he might gain ſome honour to himſelf from men, archangels or angels, as the tribute or rent to be paid to him from his creation**. Tho' I know not how it comes about that ſome bring in God as it were caſting about how he might erect a new monopoly of glory to himſelf, and ſo to ſerve this purpoſe made the world, that he might have a ſtock of glory here going in it. And I doubt we are wont ſometimes to paint him forth too much in the likeneſs of corrupt and impotent men, that by a fond ambition pleaſe themſelves and feed their luſtful fancies with their own praiſes chanted out to them by their admirers; and another while as much ſport themſelves and applaud their own greatneſs, in hearing what hideous cries the ſeverity of their own power can extort from thoſe they have a mind to make miſerable.

We all ſpeak much of the glory of God, and entertain a common belief of that being the only end for which we were all made: and I wiſh we were all more inwardly moved with a true and lively ſenſe of it. There can be nothing elſe that either God could propound to himſelf, or that we ought, if it be rightly underſtood. But we muſt not think that God, who is infinite fulneſs, would ſeek for any thing without himſelf: he needs neither our happineſs nor our miſery, in order to render himſelf more glorious; but, being full in himſelf, it was his good pleaſure to communicate of his own fulneſs: for, as *Proclus* hath well obſerved, *How can he look without himſelf, ſeeing he is a pure mind always encompaſſed with its own glorious brightneſs? But the good pleaſure of his will being filled with bounty, and the power of a moſt gracious Deity proceeding from it, liberally diſpenſed themſelves, and diſtributed thoſe gifts of grace that might*

* χρείας ἕνεκεν, ἵνα τιμὰς πρὸς τε ἀνθρώπων καὶ πρὸς θεῶν ἄλλων καὶ δαιμόνων καρποῖτο, οἷονν πρόσοδόν τινα ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως ἀρνύμενος. *Clem. Alexandrin. Strom.* 5. *è Platone.*

*might make all created beings the more to resemble that archetypal idea of themselves.* Accordingly *Timæus Locrus* represents the Creator of the world in the same strain that *Moses* did, delighted as it were in himself * to see that all things that he had made were good, and some things exceeding good. God himself is infinitely full, is always overflowing; and goodness and love issue forth from him redundantly. When he made the world, because there was nothing better than himself, he shadowed forth himself therein, and, as far as might be, was pleased to represent himself and manifest his own eternal glory and perfection in it. When he is said to seek his own glory, it is indeed nothing else but to ray and beam forth, as it were, his own lustre †.

God does then most glorify and exalt himself in the most triumphant way that may be out of himself, if I may so phrase it, when he most of all communicates himself, and when he erects such monuments of his own majesty, wherein his own love and goodness may live and reign.

And we then most of all glorify him, when we partake most of him, when our serious endeavours of a true resemblance to him and conformity to his image declare that we think nothing better than he is, and are therefore most ambitious of being one with him, by an universal resignation of ourselves unto him.

This is his glory in its lowest humiliation, while it beams forth out of himself; and our happiness in its exaltation, which Heaven never separates nor divides, altho' earth doth. His honour is his love and goodness spreading itself over all those that can or do receive it; and this he loves and cherishes wheresoever he finds it, as something of himself therein.

Thus I should leave this particular, but that being gone so far in it, it may be worth the while to take notice of three things wherein God most of all glories and

* ὡς ἀγαζόμενος ϗ ἐυφρανθεὶς.

† As *R. Jehuda*, in his book *Cosri*, hath glanced at it, הכבוד ניצוץ אור אלהי המועיל אצל עמו ובארצו *Gloria hæc scintilla est lucis divinæ, cedens in utilitatem populi ejus in terra ejus.*

and takes the greateſt complacency, in reference to creatures, as they are laid down by *Proclus*: *The firſt and chiefeſt, is concurrent with his own internal viſion of all things in that ſimple, expedite and ſimultaneous comprehenſion of all things intelligible, piercing thro' all their eſſences, and viewing them all in himſelf, he is delighted therein, as ſeeing how his own glory can diſplay and imitate itſelf in outward matter.* The ſecond is, *in the aptneſs and capacity of thoſe things which he hath made to receive a further influence of good ready to ſtream forth from himſelf into them.* The laſt is, *in the ſweet ſymmetry of his own forms with this capacity, and as it were the harmonious conſpiration and ſymphony of them, when his own light pleaſantly plays upon thoſe well-tuned inſtruments which he hath fitted to run the deſcants of his own goodneſs upon* *. And therefore it becomes us whom he hath endued with vital power of action, and in ſome ſenſe with a ſelf-moving life, to ſtir up his good gifts within ourſelves; and, if we would have him take pleaſure in us, to prepare our own ſouls more and more to receive of his liberality, that the ſtock which he is pleaſed to impart to us may not lie dead within us †. And this is the application which he makes of this particular.

## CHAP. V.

IN the next place, we may, by way of further deduction, gather, *That that Almighty wiſdom and goodneſs which firſt made all things, doth alſo perpetually conſerve and govern them*; extending themſelves thro' the whole fabric, and ſeating themſelves in every finite eſſence,

* 1. Εὐφραίνεται μὲν πρώτως κατὰ τ' ἔνδον ἑαυτῦ νόησιν, ἁπλῆ & ἀνεμποδίςῳ & ἀθρόᾳ περιδολῇ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν περιλαμδάνυσῃ. 2. δια τ' ἐπιτηδειότητα τῶν ὑποδεχομένων τ' ἐξω προϊδυσαν ἀυτῦ τῶν ἀγαθῶν χορηγίαν. 3. ἐν τῇ ἐξ ἀμροῖν συμμετρίᾳ, & ὡσανὰ συμπνοίᾳ & συμφωνίᾳ. Lib. 4. *in Plat. Tim.*

† ἵνα μὴ ἀργῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς ἡ τῦ θεῦ δόσις.

eſſence, *leaſt* (as *Proclus* expreſſeth it) *ſtraggling and falling off from the Deity, they ſhould become altogether diſorderly* *, relapſing and ſliding back into their firſt chaos. As in all motion there muſt be ſome firſt mover, from whence the beginning and perpetuation of all motion is deduced: ſo in beings there muſt be ſome firſt eſſence upon which all other muſt conſtantly depend †. As no finite thing can ſubſiſt by its own ſtrength, or take its place upon the ſtage of ſpace without the leave of an Almighty and Supreme power: ſo neither can it remain here without licence and aſſiſtance from it. The Deity indeed is the centre of all finite being, and entity itſelf, which is ſelf-ſufficient, muſt of neceſſity be the foundation and baſis of every one of theſe weak eſſences, which cannot bear up themſelves by any central power of their own; as we may alſo be almoſt aſſured of from a ſenſible feeling of all the conſtant mutations and impotency which we find both in ourſelves and all other things.

And, as God thus preſerves all things, ſo he is continually ordering and diſpoſing all things in the beſt way, and providing ſo as may be beſt for them. He did not make the world as a mere exerciſe of his almighty power, or to try his own ſtrength, and then throw it away from himſelf without any further attention; for he is that Omnipreſent life that pervades all things, containing all together within himſelf; and therefore the antient philoſophy was wont rather to ſay, that the world was in God, than that God was in the world. He did not look without himſelf to ſearch for ſome ſolid foundation that might bear up this weighty building, but indeed reared it up within him, and ſpread his own omnipotency under it and thro' it: and being centrally in every part of it, he governs it according to the preſcript of his own unſearchable wiſdom and goodneſs, and orders all things for the beſt. And this is one principal orthodox point which the *Stoics*

* Ἵνα μὴ φυγόντα τὸ θεῖον τελέως ἄταχτα γένηται.

† And therefore the *Pythagorean* philoſophy was wont to look upon theſe νία δημιυργήματα, as they call this production of every thing that is not truly divine, ὡς ἀεὶ ἐν γενέσει, as being always *in fieri*.

*Stoics* would have us to believe concerning providence, *That all things are here done in this world by the appointment of the beſt mind* *.

And now, if any ſhould quarrel with the unequal diſtribution of things here, as if rather ſome blind fortune had beſtowed her bleſſings careleſly till ſhe had no more left, and thereby made ſo many ſtarvelings, rather than ſome all-knowing mind that deals forth its bounty in due proportions; I ſhould ſend them to *Plutarch* and *Plotinus* to have their reaſons fully ſatisfied in this point, (for we here deal with the principles of natural light) all theſe debates ariſing from nothing but pedantical and carnal notions of good and evil; as if it were indeed ſo excellent a thing to be dealing with crowns and ſcepters, to be bravely arrayed, and wallow in that which is called the wealth of this world. God indeed never took any ſuch notice of good men as to make them all rulers, as the laſt of thoſe forecited authors tells us; *neither is it fit for good men who partake of an higher life than the moſt princely is, to trouble themſelves about lording and ruling over other men* †; as if ſuch a ſplendid kind of nothing as this is, were of ſo much worth. It may be generally much better for us, while we are ſo apt to magnify and court any worldly beauty and glory, as we are, that providence ſhould diſorder and deface theſe things, that we might all be weaned from the love of them, than that their lovely looks ſhould ſo enchant our ſouls as to draw them off from better things. And I dare ſay, that a ſober mind that ſhall contemplate the ſtate and temper of men's minds, and the confuſed frame of this outward world, will rather admire the infinite wiſdom of a gracious providence in permitting and ordering that diſorder which is in it, than he would were it it to be beheld in a more comely frame and order.

CHAP.

* ὅτι πάντα ὑπ' ἀρίστου νῦ γίνεται.

† διὸ δεμιτον τὺς ἄνδρας ἀγαθὺς ἄλλον βίον ζῶντας ἢ ἀρχὰς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀμείνω, τύτυς ἀυτῶν ἄρχοντας εἶναι. *Plotin. Enn.* 3. *l.* 2. *c.* 9.

## CHAP. VI.

WE proceed now to another deduction or inference, *viz. That all true happiness consists in a participation of God, arising out of the assimilation and conformity of our souls to him; and that the most real misery ariseth out of the apostacy of souls from God.* And so we are led to speak of the rewards and punishments of the life to come: and it will not be any hard labour from what hath been said, to discover the original and nature of both of them; and tho' perhaps we cannot dive to the bottom of them, yet we may go about them, and tell how in a general way to define and distinguish them.

Happiness is nothing else, as we usually describe it to ourselves, but the enjoyment of some chief good: and therefore the Deity is so boundlesly happy, because it is every way one with its own immense perfection; and every thing so much the more feelingly lives upon happiness, by how much the more it comes to partake of God, and to be made like to him: and therefore the *Platonists* well defined it to consist in the idea of good. And, as it is impossible to enjoy happiness without a fruition of God; so it is impossible to enjoy him without an assimilation and conformity of our natures to him in a way of true goodness and Godlike perfection. It is a common maxim of *Socrates, It is not lawful for any impure nature to touch pure Divinity.* For we cannot enjoy God by any external conjunction with him: divine fruition is not by a mere kind of apposition or contiguity of our natures with the divine, but it is an internal union, whereby a divine spirit informing our souls, sends the strength of a divine life thro' them; and, as this is more strong and active, so is happiness itself more energetical within us. It must be some divine efflux pervading our souls, awakening and exalting all the vital

* μὴ καθαρῷ καθαρῦ ἐφάπτεσθαι ὑ θεμιτὸν ἦ.

vital powers of them into an active ſympathy with ſome abſolute good, that renders us compleatly bleſſed. It is not to ſit gazing upon a Deity; but it is an inward feeling of this mighty goodneſs diſplaying itſelf within us, melting our fierce and furious natures, that would fain be ſomething in contradiction to God, into an univerſal compliance with itſelf, and wrapping up our minds wholly into itſelf, whereby God comes to be all in all to us. And therefore, ſo long as our wills and affections endeavour to fix upon any thing but God and true goodneſs, we do but indeed anxiouſly endeavour to extract happineſs out of ſomething that will yield no more than a flinty rock to all our preſſing. The more we endeavour to force out our affections to ſtay and reſt themſelves upon any finite thing, the more violently will they recoil back again upon us. It is only a true ſenſe and reliſh of God that can tame and maſter that rage of our inſatiable and reſtleſs deſires which is ſtill forcing us out of ourſelves to ſeek ſome perfect good, that which, from a latent ſenſe of our own ſouls, we feel ourſelves to want.

The foundation of heaven and hell is laid in men's own ſouls, in an ardent and vehement appetite after happineſs, which can neither attain to it, nor miſs finally of it and of all appearances of it, without a quick and piercing ſenſe. Our ſouls are not like ſo many lumps of dead and ſenſeleſs matter to a true living happineſs; they are not like theſe dull clods of earth which diſcern not the good or ill ſavour of thoſe plants that grow upon them. Gain and loſs are very ſenſibly felt by greedy minds. The ſoul of man was formed of ſuch capacity that it might thereby be better fitted to entertain a full and liberal happineſs, that the divine love and goodneſs might more freely ſpread itſelf in it, and unite it to itſelf. And accordingly when it miſſeth of God, it muſt feel ſo much the more the fury and pangs of miſery, and find a ſevere divine vengeance ariſing out of its guilty conſcience, which like a fiery ſcorpion will faſten its ſtings within it. And thus as heaven, love, joy, peace, ſerenity, and all that which happineſs is, buds and bloſſoms out of holy and god-

like ſpirits: ſo alſo hell and miſery will perpetually ſpring out of impure minds, diſtracted with envy, malice, ambition, ſelf-will or any inordinate affections to any particular thing.

This is that fatal law * that is firſt made in the council of heaven, *That purity and holineſs ſhall be happy, and all vice and ſin miſerable.* Holineſs of mind will be more and more attracting God to itſelf, as all vice will lapſe and ſlide more and more from him. The more pure our ſouls are, and abſtracted from all worldly things, the more ſincerely will they endeavour the neareſt union that may be with God, the more they will pant and breath after him alone, leaving the chace of any other delight. There is ſuch a noble and free-born ſpirit in true goodneſs ſeated in immortal natures, as will not be ſatisfied merely with innocency, nor reſt itſelf in this mixed bodily ſtate, tho' it could converſe with bodily things, without ſinking to a vitious love of them; but would always be returning to a more intimate union with that being from whence it came, and which will be drawing it more and more to itſelf: and therefore it ſeems very reaſonable to believe that, if *Adam* had continued in a ſtate of innocency, he ſhould have been raiſed by God to a greater fruition of him, and his nature ſhould have been elevated to a more tranſcendant condition. And, if there was any covenant made with *Adam* in paradiſe, I think we cannot underſtand it in any other ſenſe but this: the Scripture ſpeaks not of any other terms between God and man. And this law of life, which we have ſpoken of, is eternal and immutable; nor does the diſpenſation of grace by Chriſt Jeſus at all abrogate or diſannul, but rather enforce it: for ſo we find that the law of Chriſt, that which he gave out to all his diſciples, was this law of perfection that carries true happineſs along in the ſenſe of it, which, as the great prince of ſouls, he diſpenſeth by his eternal ſpirit in a vital way unto the minds of men.

CHAP.

* Ἀδραστίας νόμος, which *Plato* ſpeaks of.

## CHAP. VII.

IN the *fourth* place, we may further collect how to ſtate rightly the notion of the divine juſtice; the ſcope whereof is nothing elſe but to aſſert and eſtabliſh eternal law and right, and to preſerve the integrity thereof; it is no deſign of vengeance, which, tho' God takes on wicked men, yet he delights not in it. The divine juſtice firſt preſcribes that which is moſt conformable to the Divine Nature, and mainly purſues the conſervation of righteouſneſs. We would not think him a good ruler that ſhould give out laws to enſnare his ſubjects, with an even indifferency of mind whether his laws be kept, or puniſhments ſuffered; but ſuch a one who would make the beſt ſecurity for right and equity by wholſome laws, and by annexing puniſhments as a mean to prevent tranſgreſſion, and not to manifeſt ſeverity. The proper ſcope of juſtice ſeems to be nothing elſe but the preſerving and maintaining of that which is juſt and right: the ſcope of that juſtice which is in any righteous law, is properly to provide for a righteous execution of that which is juſt and fit to be, without intending puniſhment; for to intend that properly and directly, might rather ſeem cruelty than juſtice: and therefore juſtice employs puniſhment only for a ſecurity of performance of righteous laws, *viz.* either for the amendment of the perſon trangreſſing, or as a due example deterring others from tranſgreſſion. For I would here ſuppoſe a good and righteous man, who, in ſome deſolate place of the world, ſhould have the command of an hundred more, and himſelf be ſupreme and under no command. He preſcribes laws to this company, makes it death for any one to take away another's life. But now one proves a murderer, kills one of his fellows; afterwards repents heartily, and is like to prove uſeful among the reſt of his fellows: they all are ſo heartily affected one to another, that there

is no danger, upon ſparing this penitent's life, that any one of them ſhould be encouraged to commit the like evil. The caſe being thus ſtated, it will not ſeem difficult to conclude that the juſtice of this righteous and good commander would ſpare this poor penitent: for his juſtice would have preſerved that life which is loſt, and ſeeing there is nothing further that it can obtain in taking away this, it will ſave this which may be ſaved; for it affects not any blood; and when it deſtroys, it is out of neceſſity, to take away a deſtructive perſon, and to give example, which in the caſe ſtated falls not out.

Again, juſtice is the juſtice of goodneſs, and ſo cannot delight to puniſh; it aims at nothing more than the maintaining and promoting the laws of goodneſs, and hath always ſome good end before it, and therefore would never puniſh except ſome further good were in view.

True juſtice never ſupplants any that itſelf might appear more glorious in their ruins; for this would be to make juſtice love ſomething better than righteouſneſs, and to advance and magnify itſelf in ſomething which is not itſelf, but rather an aberration from itſelf: and therefore God himſelf ſo earneſtly contends with the *Jews* about the equity of his own ways, with frequent aſſeverations that his juſtice is thirſty after no man's blood, but rather that ſinners would repent, turn from their evil ways and live. And then juſtice is moſt advanced, when its purpoſes are fulfilled; and tho' it does not, and will not, acquit the guilty without repentance, yet the deſign of it is to encourage innocency and promote true goodneſs.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

THE former deduction leads me to another a-kin to it, which ſhall be my laſt; and it is that which *Cicero* intimates in his treatiſe *of laws*, viz. *That ſeeing there is ſuch an intercourſe and ſociety as it were between God and men, therefore there is alſo ſome law between them, which is the bond of all communion.* God himſelf, from whom all law takes its riſe and emanation, is not without all law, nor, in a ſober ſenſe, above it. Neither are the primitive rules of his œconomy in this world the ſole reſults of an abſolute will, but the ſacred decrees of reaſon and goodneſs. I cannot think God to be ſo unbounded in his legiſlative power, that he can make every thing law, both for his own diſpenſations and our obſervance, that we may ſometimes imagine. We cannot ſay indeed that God was abſolutely determined from ſome law within himſelf to make us; but I think we may ſafely ſay, when he had once determined to make us, he could neither make us ſinful, ſeeing he had no idea nor ſhadow of evil within himſelf, nor incloſe thoſe dreadful fates within our natures, or ſet them over us, that might by ſome hidden inſpiration (as ſome are pleaſed to phraſe it) ſecretly work our ruin, and ſilently carry us on, making uſe of our own natural infirmity, to eternal miſery. Neither could he deſign to make his creatures miſerable, that ſo he might ſhew himſelf juſt. Theſe are rather the by-ways of cruel and ambitious men, who ſeek their own advantage in the miſchiefs of other men, and contrive their own riſe by their ruins: this is not divine juſtice, but the cruelty of degenerated men.

But, as the divinity could propound nothing to itſelf in the making of the world, but the communication of its own love and goodneſs; ſo it can never ſwerve from the ſame ſcope and end in the diſpenſation of itſelf to it. Neither did God ſo boundleſly enlarge the appetite of ſouls after ſome all-ſufficient good, that ſo

they might be the more unſpeakably tortured in the miſſing of it; but that they might more certainly return to the original of their beings. And ſuch buſy-working eſſences as the ſouls of men are, could neither be made as inſenſible of true happineſs as ſtocks and ſtones are, neither could they contain the whole ſum and perfection of it within themſelves: therefore they muſt alſo have been informed with ſuch principles as might conduct them back again to him from whom they firſt came. God does not make creatures for the mere ſport of his almighty arm, to raiſe, and ruin, and toſs up and down at mere pleaſure. No, the good pleaſure of that will that made them is the ſame ſtill; it changes not, tho' we may change, and make ourſelves incapable of partaking the bliſsful fruits and effects of it.

And ſo we come to conſider that law emboſomed in the ſouls of men which ties them again to their Creator, and this is called *the law of nature*; which indeed is nothing elſe but a paraphraſe or comment upon the nature of God, as it copies forth itſelf in the ſoul of man.

Becauſe God is the firſt mind and the firſt good, propagating an imitation of himſelf in ſuch immortal natures as the ſouls of men are; therefore ought the ſoul to renounce all mortal and worldly things, and preſerve its affections chaſte and pure for God himſelf; to love him with a moſt univerſal and unbounded love; to truſt in him and reverence him; to converſe with him in a free and chearful manner, as one *in whom we live, and move, and have our beings*, Acts xvii. 28. being perpetually encompaſſed by him, and never moving out of him; to reſign all our ways and wills up to him with an equal and indifferent mind, as knowing that he guides and governs all things in the beſt way; to ſink ourſelves as low in humility, as we are in ſelf-nothingneſs.

And becauſe all thoſe ſcattered rays of beauty and lovelineſs which we behold ſpread up and down all the world over, are only the emanations of that inexhauſted light which is above; therefore ſhould we love them all in that, and climb up always by thoſe ſun-beams

unto

unto the eternal Father of lights: we ſhould look upon him, and take from him the pattern of our lives, and always eying of him, ſhould poliſh and ſhape our ſouls into the cleareſt reſemblance of him *; and in all our behaviour in this world (that great temple of his) deport ourſelves decently and reverently, with that humility, meekneſs, and modeſty, that becomes his houſe. We ſhould endeavour more and more to be perfect, as he is; in all our dealings with men, doing good, ſhewing mercy and compaſſion, advancing juſtice and righteouſneſs, being always full of charity and good works; and look upon ourſelves as having nothing to do here but to diſplay the glory of our heavenly Father, and frame our hearts and lives according to that pattern which we behold in the mount of a holy contemplation of him. Thus we ſhould endeavour to preſerve that heavenly fire of the divine love and goodneſs (which iſſuing forth from God, centres itſelf within us, and is the original virtue of our beings) always alive and burning in the temple of our ſouls, and to ſacrifice ourſelves back again to him. And, when we fulfill this royal law ariſing out of the heart of eternity, then ſhall we here appear to be the children of God, when he thus lives in us, as our Saviour ſpeaks, *Matth.* v. 45. And ſo we ſhall cloſe up this particular with that high privilege with which immortal ſouls are inveſted: they are all the offspring of God, for ſo St. *Paul* allows the heathen poet to call them, Acts xvii. 28.: they are all royally deſcended, and have no father but God himſelf, being originally formed into his image and likeneſs; and when they expreſs the purity and holineſs of the divine life in being perfect as God is perfect, then they manifeſt themſelves to be his children, *Matth.* v. 45. And in *Matth.* vii. 11. Chriſt encourageth men to ſeek and pray for the Spirit (which is the beſt gift that God can give to men), becauſe he is their heavenly Father, much more bountiful and tender to all helpleſs ſouls that ſeek to him, than any earthly parent, whoſe nature is degenerated from that primitive goodneſs,

* ἄγαλμα θεῖον τεκταίνων τὴν ἑαυτῦ ψυχήν. *Hierocles*, p. 28.

neſs, can be to his children. But thoſe apoſtate ſpirits who know not to return to the original of their beings, but implant themſelves into ſome other ſtock, and ſeek to incorporate and unite themſelves to another line by ſin and wickedneſs, cut themſelves off from this divine privilege, and loſe their own birth right; and lapſe into another nature. All this was well expreſſed by *Proclus*, *All ſouls are the children of God, but all of them know not their God; but ſuch as know him and live like to him, are called the children of God* *.

## CHAP. IX.

BUT here, as an appendix to the two former deductions, it may be of good uſe to inquire into the reaſon of ſuch laws as we call poſitive, to which God hath in all times, as is commonly ſuppoſed, enjoined obedience; which are not the eternal dictates and decretals of the divine nature communicating itſelf to immortal ſpirits, but rather deduce their original from the free will and pleaſure of God.

To ſolve this difficulty, that of St. *Paul* may ſeem a fit *medium*, who tells us, *The law was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion*, Gal. iii. 19.; tho' I doubt not but he means thereby the moral law as well as any other. The true intent and ſcope of theſe poſitive laws, (and it may be of ſuch an external promulgation of the moral) ſeems to be nothing elſe but this, to ſecure the eternal law of righteouſneſs from tranſgreſſion. As the *Jews* ſay of the deciſions of their wiſemen, that they were *an hedge to the law*; ſo we may ſay of theſe divine decretals, they were but cautionary and preventive of diſobedience to that higher law; and therefore St. *Paul* tells us why the moral law was promulgated, 1. Tim. i. 9. not

* πᾶσαι ψυχαὶ θεῶν παῖδες, ἀλλ' ὧ πᾶσαι τ' ἑαυτῶν ἐπίγνωσαν θεόν. αἱ δ' ἐπιγνῶσαι κ' τ' ὁμοίαν ἑλόμεναι ζωὴν, καλοῦνται θεῶν παῖδες. Lib. 4. *in Timæum.*

not ſo much becauſe of righteous men, in whom the law of nature lives, who perform the things of the law, without any outward law, but it was given for the lawleſs and diſobedient. And therefore I doubt not but we may ſafely conclude, that God gave not thoſe poſitive laws merely to manifeſt his abſolute dominion and ſovereignty, as ſome think, but for the good of thoſe who were enjoined to obey; and in this belief *Moſes* endeavours almoſt throughout the whole book of *Deuteronomy* to ſtrengthen the *Iſraelites:* and therefore God was ſo ready upon all occaſions to diſpenſe with theſe laws, and requires the *Jews* to omit the obſervance of them, when they might ſeem to juſtle with any other law of moral duty or human neceſſity, as may be obſerved in many inſtances in Scripture.

But, for a more diſtinct unfolding of this queſtion, we may take notice of this difference in the notion of good and evil, as we are to converſe with them. Some things are ſo abſolutely, and ſomethings are ſo only relatively. That which is abſolutely good, is every way ſuperior to us, and we ought always to be commanded by it, becauſe we are made under it: but that which is relatively good to us, may ſometimes be commanded by us. Eternal truth and righteouſneſs are in themſelves perfectly and abſolutely good, and the more we conform ourſelves to them, the better we are. But thoſe things that are only good relatively and in order to us, we may ſay of them, that they are ſo much the better, by how much the more they are conformed to us, I mean, by how much the more they are accommodated to our eſtate and condition, and may be fit means to help and promote us in our purſuit of ſome higher good: and ſuch indeed is the matter of all poſitive laws, and the ſymbolical or ritual part of religion. And, as we are made for the former, *viz.* what is abſolutely good, to ſerve that; ſo are theſe latter made for us, as our Saviour hath taught us, when he tells us that *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*, Mark ii. 27., and, as ſincere and real Chriſtians grow up towards true perfection, the leſs need have they of poſitive precepts or external helps.

Yet

Yet I doubt it is nothing elſe but a wanton and proud temper of ſpirit in our times, that makes ſo many talk of being above ordinances, who, if their own arrogance and preſumption would give them leave to lay aſide the flattering glaſs of their own ſelf-love, would find themſelves to have moſt need of them.

What I have obſerved concerning the things abſolutely good, I conceive to be included in that *everlaſting righteouſneſs* mentioned Dan. ix. 24. which the Prophet there ſaith ſhould be brought in and advanced by the *Meſſiah*: this is the righteouſneſs which is of an eternal and immutable nature, as being a conformity with eternal and unchangeable truth. For there is a righteouſneſs which thus is not eternal, but poſitive, and at the pleaſure of God that dictates it: and ſuch was the righteouſneſs which Chriſt ſaid it became him to fulfil when he was baptized, Matth. iii. 15.; there was no neceſſity that any ſuch thing ſhould become due. But the foundation of this everlaſting righteouſneſs is ſomething unalterable. To ſpeak more particularly, That the higheſt good ſhould be loved in the higheſt degree; that dependant creatures, who borrow all they have from God, ſhould never glory in themſelves, or admire themſelves, but ever admire and adore that unbounded goodneſs which is the ſource of their beings, and all the good they partake of; that we ſhould always do that which is juſt and right, according to the meaſure we would others ſhould do with us: theſe, and ſome other things which a rectifyed reaſon will eaſily ſupply, are immutably true and righteous; ſo that it never was nor can be true, that they are unneceſſary. And whoſo hath his heart moulded into a delight in ſuch a righteouſneſs and the practice thereof, hath this eternal righteouſneſs brought into his ſoul, which righteouſneſs is alſo true and real, not like that imaginary external righteouſneſs of the law in which the *Phariſees* boaſted.

CHAP.

## CHAP. X.

FOR the concluding of this diſcourſe, we ſhall, as explanatory of what has been ſaid, a little conſider how inconſiſtent a thing a perfect knowledge of God is with our preſent mundane and corporeal ſtate. *While we are in the body, we are abſent from the Lord*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 Corinth. v. 6. and that (I think) without a myſtery: ſuch bodies as ours are, being fitted for an animal ſtate, and pieces of this whole machine of ſenſible matter, are perpetually drawing down our ſouls, when they would raiſe up themſelves by contemplation of the Deity; and the caring more or leſs for the things of this body, ſo exerciſes the ſoul in this ſtate, that it cannot attend upon God without diſtraction. In the antient metaphyſics, ſuch a body as this is we carry about us, is called the dark and den ſepulchre in which ſouls are impriſoned and entombed, with many other expreſſions of the like import; and *Proclus* tells us that the commoration of the ſoul in ſuch a body as this, is, according to the general determination of antiquity, nothing elſe but *a dwelling* or *pitching its tabernacle in the valley of oblivion and death*. But *Plotinus* ſeems not to be eaſily ſatisfied with allegorical deſcriptions; and therefore, ſearching more ſtrictly into this matter, tells his own and their meaning in plainer terms, that this body is an occaſion of evil two ways; as it hinders its mental operations, preſenting its *idola ſpecûs* continually to it; and, as it calls forth its advertency to its own paſſions, which, while it exerciſeth itſelf about too earneſtly, it falls into a ſinful inordinacy *.

Yet did not the *Platoniſts*, nor the more contemplative *Jews*, deny the exiſtence of all kind of body in the other ſtate, as if there ſhould be nothing reſiding there but naked ſouls, totally diveſted of all corporeal eſſence; for they held that the ſoul ſhould in the other world

* 1. ὅτι τὸ ἐμπόδιον πρὸς τὰς νοήσεις γίνεται. 2. ὅτι ἡδονῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ λυπῶν πίμπλησιν αὐτὴν. *Enn.* 4. l. 8.

world be united with a body, not ſuch a one as it did act in here, which was not without diſturbance, but ſuch as ſhould be moſt agreeable to the ſoul, which they called *the ſpiritual vehicle of the ſoul* *, and by *Zoroaſter* it was called *a kind of aereal mantle in which the ſoul wraps herſelf*, which he ſaid, remained with her in the ſtate of glory †.

But to return; the *Platoniſts* have pointed out a threefold knowledge of God, one *ſcientifical*, the ſecond, *intellectual*, the laſt, *from the divine preſence* ‡. And this laſt they affirmed to be unattainable by us, it being that ineffable light whereby the Divinity comprehends its own eſſence, penetrating all that immenſity of being which itſelf is. The firſt may be attained to in this life; but the ſecond, in its full perfection, we cannot reach here in this life; becauſe this knowledge ariſeth out of a bliſsful union with God himſelf, which therefore they are wont to call *a contact of intellectual being*; and ſometimes, that I may phraſe it in the Scripture words, *a beholding of God face to face* ‖, which is that *ſecret place of preſence* **, of which the *Jewiſh* writers ſpeak, which we cannot attain to while we continue in this concrete and bodily ſtate. And ſo when *Moſes* deſired to behold the face of God, that is, as the *Jews* underſtand it ††, that a diſtinct idea of the divine eſſence might be imprinted upon his mind, God told him, *No man can ſee me and live*; that is, no man in this corruptible ſtate is capable of attaining to this *ſeeing face to face*, as *Maimonides* expounds it, *The underſtanding of the living man, who is compounded of body and ſoul, is utterly unable clearly to apprehend the divine eſſence, to ſee it as it is* ‡‡. And ſo St. *Paul* diſtinguiſheth the knowledge

* πνευματικὸν ὄχημα τῆς ψυχῆς.

† ἔστι γὰρ εἰδώλῳ μερὶς ἀὴρ τόπον ἀμφιφάοντα. and in the *Jewiſh* language it is מלבוש הפנימי *indumentum quoddam interius* as *Gaulmin* hath obſerved in his treatiſe *De vita et morte Moſis*.

‡ 1. κατ' ἐπιστήμην. 2. κατὰ νόησιν. 3. κατ' παρουσίαν.

‖ ἐπαφὴν τῷ νοητῷ.

** αὐτοφάνειαν, or ἐπιβολὴν αὐτοπτικὴν.

†† סוד הפנים *arcanum facierum.*

‡‡ שאין כח בדעת האדם החי הוא מחובר מגוף ונפש &c. *Maimon. De fund. legis, cap.* 1.

ledge of this life as taken in this complex ſenſe, and of the life to come: that *now we ſee in a glaſs*, which is continually ſullied and darkened, while we look into it, by the breathing of our animal fancies, paſſions and imaginations upon it, and *darkly*; *but* we ſhall ſee *then face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And in the like manner does a Greek philoſopher compare theſe two ſorts of knowledge which the ſoul hath of God in this life and in that to come. *The ſoul will reckon all this knowledge of God which we have here by way of ſcience but like a fable or parable, when once it is in conjunction with the Father, feaſting upon truth itſelf, and beholding God in the pure rays of his own divinity* *. I ſhall conclude all with that which St. *Paul* expreſsly tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 50. *Fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; where, by *fleſh and blood*, he ſeems to mean nothing elſe but man in this complex and compounded ſtate of ſoul and body, I mean corruptible, earthy body †. But, in oppoſition to this groſs earthy body, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *a ſpiritual body*, v. 44. ſuch as ſhall *put on incorruption and immortality*, v. 53.; and conſequently differing from that body which here makes up this compounded animal being: and accordingly our Saviour ſpeaks of *the children of the reſurrection*, that *they neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor can they die any more, but are equal unto the angels*, Luke xxx. v. 36. or, as it is in St. *Matthew* and *Mark*, *as the angels of God*; and ſo the *Jewiſh* writers are wont to uſe the ſame phraſe for expreſſing the ſtate of Glory, *viz.* that then good men ſhall be as the miniſtring angels.



* Τὰς ἐπιστημονικὰς λόγνς μύθνς ἡγήσεται συνῶσα τῷ πατρὶ ᾗ συνεσιωμένη ἢ ἀληθειαν τῦ ὄντος, ᾗ ἐν αὐγῇ καθαρᾷ.

† It was a common periphraſis of this ἀνθρωπος ὁ πολὺς amongſt the *Jews*, בשר ודם in the like ſenſe is σὰρξ ᾗ αἷμα, *fleſh and blood*, in thoſe and other places in the New Teſtament uſed, where this phraſe occurs. *viz. Matth.* xvi. 17. *Gal.* i. 16. *Epheſ.* vi. 12. *Heb.* ii. 14.

A

# DISCOURSE

OF

# LEGAL Righteouſneſs

AND THE

# Righteouſneſs of FAITH.

A

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ROM. ix. 31, 32.

*But Iſrael, which followed after the Law of Righteouſneſs, hath not attained to the Law of Righteouſneſs: Wherefore? Becauſe they ſought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law.*

## CHAP. I.

THE doctrine of Chriſtian religion propounded to us by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, is ſet forth with ſo much ſimplicity, and yet with ſo much repugnancy to that degenerate genius and ſpirit that rules in the hearts and lives of men, that we may truly ſay of it, it is both the eaſieſt and the hardeſt thing: it is a revelation wrapt up in a complication of myſteries, like that book of the *Apocalypſe*, which both unfolds and hides thoſe great myſteries whereof it treats; or, as *Plato* ſometimes choſe ſo to explain the ſecrets of his metaphyſical or theological philoſophy, *that he that read might not be able to underſtand* *, except he were a



* ὥστε ὁ ἀναγνὺς μὴ γνῷ.

ſon of wiſdom, and had been trained up in the knowledge of it. The principles of true religion are all in themſelves plain and eaſy, delivered in the moſt familiar way, ſo that he that runs may read them; they are all ſo clear and perſpicuous, that they need no key of analytical demonſtration to unlock them: the Scripture being written to the learned and to the unlearned alike; and yet it is wiſdom in a myſtery which the princes of this world underſtand not; a ſealed book with which the greateſt of men may be moſt unacquainted: it is like that *pillar of fire* and *of a cloud* that parted between the *Iſraelites* and the *Egyptians*, giving a clear and comfortable light to all thoſe who are under the guidance thereof; but being full of darkneſs and obſcurity to thoſe who rebel againſt it. Divine truth is not to be diſcerned ſo much in a man's brain, as in his heart. Divine wiſdom is a tree of life to them that find her; and it is only life that can feelingly converſe with life. All the thin ſpeculations and ſubtileſt diſcourſes of philoſophy cannot ſo well unfold or define any ſenſible object, nor tell any one ſo well what it is, as his own naked ſenſe will do. There is a divine and ſpiritual ſenſe which only is able to converſe internally with the life and ſoul of divine truth, as mixing and uniting itſelf with it; while vulgar minds behold only the body and outſide of it. Tho' in itſelf it be moſt intelligible, and ſuch that man's mind may moſt eaſily apprehend; yet there is a *ſhell of pollution* *, (as the *Hebrew* writers call that *maſs of evil* †), upon all corrupt minds, which hinders the lively taſte and reliſh of it. This is that thick and palpable darkneſs which cannot comprehend that divine light which ſhines in the minds and underſtandings of all men, but makes them to deny that very truth which they ſeem to entertain. *The world thro' wiſdom* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *knew not God*, 1 Cor. i. 21. Thoſe great diſputers of this world were too full of nice and empty ſpeculations to know him who is only to be diſcerned by a compoſed, humble, and ſelf-denying mind: their curioſity ſerved rather to dazzle their eyes

* יצר הרע † קליפה חטומה

eyes than to enlighten them; while they rather proudly braved themſelves in their knowledge of the Deity, than humbly ſubjected their own ſouls to a compliance with it; making the divinity nothing elſe but as it were a flattering glaſs that might reflect and ſet off to them the beauty of their own wit and parts: and, while they ſeemed to converſe with God himſelf, they rather amorouſly courted their own image in him, and fell in love with their own ſhape. Therefore the beſt acquaintance with religion is *a knowledge taught by God**: it is a light that deſcends from heaven, which is only able to guide and conduct the ſouls of men to heaven from whence it comes. The *Jewiſh* doctors uſe to put it among the fundamental articles of their religion, *That their law was from heaven* †: I am ſure we may much rather reckon it amongſt the principles of our Chriſtian religion in an higher way, that it is an influx from God upon the minds of good men. And this is the great deſign of the goſpel, to open and unfold to us the true way of recourſe to God; a contrivance for the uniting the ſouls of men to him, and the deriving a participation of God to men, to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to eſtabliſh the true tabernacle of God in the ſpirits of men, which was done in a typical and emblematical way under the law. And herein conſiſts the main pre-eminence which the goſpel hath above the law, in that it ſo clearly unfolds the way and method of uniting human nature to divinity; which the Apoſtle ſeems mainly to aim at in theſe words, *But Iſrael which followed after the law of righteouſneſs*, &c.

CHAP.

* Θεοδίδακτος γνῶσις.

† התורה מן השמים

## CHAP. II.

FOR the unfolding of the words of the text, we ſhall endeavour to ſearch out, Firſt, *What the Jewiſh notion of a legal righteouſneſs was, which the Apoſtle here condemns.*

Secondly, *What that evangelical righteouſneſs, or righteouſneſs of faith is, which he endeavours to eſtabliſh in the room of it.*

For the *Firſt*, That which the Apoſtle here blames the *Jews* for, ſeems to be indeed nothing elſe but an epitome or *compendium* of all that which he elſewhere diſputes againſt them for: which is not merely and barely concerning the formal notion of juſtification, as ſome may think, *viz.* Whether the formal notion of it reſpects only faith, or works in the perſon juſtified (tho' there may be a reſpect to that alſo); it is not merely a ſubtile ſchool-controverſy which he ſeems to handle; but it is of a greater latitude; it is indeed concerning the whole way of life and happineſs, and the proper ſcope of reſtoring mankind to perfection and union with the Deity, which the *Jews* expected by virtue of that ſyſtem of laws which were delivered upon Mount *Sinai*, augmented and enlarged by the *Gemara* of their own traditions.

Which that we may the better underſtand, perhaps it may not be amiſs a little to traverſe the writings of their moſt approved antient authors, that ſo finding out their conſtant received opinions concerning their law and the works thereof, we may the better and more fully underſtand what St. *Paul* and the other Apoſtles aim at in their diſputes againſt them.

The *Jewiſh* notion generally of the law is this; "That, in that model of life contained in that body of "laws, diſtinguiſhed ordinarily into moral, judicial, "and ceremonial, was compriſed the whole method "of raiſing man to his perfection; and that they ha-"ving only this book of laws without them, to con-"verſe

" verſe with, needed nothing elſe to procure eternal " life, perfection and happineſs: as if this had been " the only means God had for the ſaving of men and " making them happy, to ſet before them in an exter- " nal way a volume of laws, ſtatutes, and ordinances, " and ſo to leave them to work out and purchaſe to " themſelves eternal life in the obſervance of them."

Now, this general notion of theirs we ſhall unfold in two particulars.

*Firſt*, As a foundation of all the reſt, they took up this as an hypotheſis, or common principle; " That " mankind had ſuch an abſolute and perfect free-will, " and ſuch a ſufficient power from within himſelf to " determine himſelf to virtue and goodneſs, as that he " only needed ſome law, as the matter or object to " exerciſe this innate power about; and therefore need- " ed not that God ſhould do any thing more for him " than merely to acquaint him with his divine will and " pleaſure."

And for this we have *Maimonides* ſpeaking very fully and magiſterially, that this was one of the articles of their faith, and one main foundation on which the law ſtood. His words are theſe: " The power of free- " will is given to every man, to determine himſelf " (if he will) to that which is good, and to be good; " or to determine himſelf to that which is evil, and to " be wicked (if he will.) Both are in his power, ac- " cording to what is written in the law, *Behold, man* " *is become as one of us, to know good and evil*, " Gen. iii. 22.; that is to ſay, Behold this ſort of " creature, man, is alone (and there is not a ſecond " like to man) in this, *viz.* That man, from himſelf, " by his own proper knowledge and power, knows " good and evil, and does what pleaſeth him in an un- " controulable way, ſo as none can hinder him as to " the doing of either good or evil *."

And, a little after, he thus interprets thoſe words in the *Lamentations*, of the repenting church, chap. iii. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord*, " Seeing

* In *Halacah Teſhubah*, or treatiſe of repentance, chap. v.

" Seeing that we, who are endued with the power of " free-will, have moſt wittingly and freely committed " all our tranſgreſſions, it is meet and becoming that " we ſhould convert ourſelves by repentance, and for- " ſake all our iniquities, foraſmuch as this alſo is in our " power: This is the importance of thoſe words, *Let* " *us ſearch and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord.* " And this is a great fundamental, the very pillar of the " law and precept, according to what is written, Deut. " xxx. 15. *See, I have ſet before thee this day, life and* " *death, good and evil.*"

Thus we ſee *Maimonides*, who was well verſed in the antienteſt *Jewiſh* learning, and in high eſteem among all the *Jews*, is pleaſed to reckon this as a main principle and foundation upon which that law ſtood; as indeed it muſt needs be, if life and perfection might be acquired by virtue of thoſe legal precepts which had only an external adminiſtration, being ſet before their external ſenſes, and publiſhed in their ears as the ſtatute-laws of any other common-wealth uſe to be. Which was the very notion that they themſelves had of theſe laws. And therefore the *Jewiſh* doctors *, taking notice of that paſſage in the *Canticles*, *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth*, they thus gloſs upon it: " At the " time of the giving of the law, the congregation of " *Iſrael* deſired that *Moſes* might ſpeak to them, they " being not able to hear the words of God himſelf: " and while he ſpake, they heard, and hearing forgat; " and thereupon moved this debate among themſelves, " What is this *Moſes*, a man of fleſh and blood? and " what is his law, that we ſo ſoon learn, and ſo ſoon " forget it? O that God would kiſs us with the kiſſes " of his mouth!" that is, in their ſenſe, that God would teach them in a more vital and internal way. And then (as they go on) *Moſes* makes this anſwer; " That " this could not be then; but it ſhould ſo come to paſs " in the time to come, in the days of the *Meſſiah*, when " the law ſhould be written in their hearts, as it is ſaid, " Jer. xxxi. 33. *I will write it in their hearts.*"

By

* In *Breſhith Rabbah* (a very antient writing.)

By this we may ſee how neceſſary it was for the *Jews*, that they might be conſiſtent to their grand principle of obtaining life and perfection by this dead letter, and a thing merely without themſelves, (as not being radicated in the vital powers of their own ſouls) to eſtabliſh ſuch a power of free-will as might be able uncontroulably to entertain it, and ſo readily, by its own ſtrength, perform all the dictates of it.

And that *Maimonides* was not the firſt of the *Jewiſh* writers who expound that paſſage, Gen. iii. 22. *Behold, man is become like one of us, to know good and evil.* of free-will, may appear from the ſeveral *Chaldee* paraphraſts upon it, which ſeem very much to intimate that ſenſe. Which, by the way, (tho' I cannot allow all that which the *Jews* deduce from it) I think is not without ſomething of truth, *viz.* That that liberty which is founded in reaſon, and which mankind only in this lower world hath above other creatures, may be there alſo meant. But, whatever it is, I am ſure the *Jewiſh* commentators upon that place generally follow the rigid ſenſe of *Maimonides*.

To this purpoſe *R. Bechai*, a man of no ſmall learning, both in the *Talmudic* and *Cabaliſtical* doctrine of the *Jews*, tells us, That, upon *Adam*'s firſt tranſgreſſion, that grand liberty of indifferency equally to good or evil began firſt to diſcover itſelf; whereas, before that, he was all intellect and wholly ſpiritual, (as that common *Cabaliſtical* notion was) being from within only determined to that which was good. But I ſhall at large relate his words; becauſe of their pertinency and uſefulneſs in the matter now in hand, "*Adam*, before "his ſin, acted from a neceſſity of nature, and all his "actions were nothing elſe but the iſſues of pure and "perfect underſtanding. Even as the angels of God, "being nothing elſe but intelligences, put forth nothing "elſe but acts of intelligence; juſt ſo was man before "he ſinned, and did eat of the tree of knowledge of "good and evil: but, after this tranſgreſſion, he had "the power of election and free-will, whereby he was "able to will good or evil." And, a little after, gloſſing on thoſe words, Gen. iii. 7. *And the eyes of them both*

*both were opened*, he addeth, " They derived the power " of free-will from the tree of knowledge of good and " evil: and now they became endued with this power " of determining themſelves to good or evil; and this " property is divine, and in ſome reſpect a good pro- " perty." So that, according to the mind of our author, the firſt original and pedigree of free-will is to be derived not ſo much from the *æra* of creation, as from that after-*epocha* of man's tranſgreſſion, or eating of the forbidden fruit: ſo that the indifferency of man's will to good or evil, and a power to determine himſelf freely to either, did then firſt of all unfold itſelf; whereas, before he converſed like a pure intelligence with its firſt cauſe, without any propenſion at all to material things, being determined, like a proper natural agent, ſolely to that which is good: and theſe propenſions ariſing upon the firſt tranſgreſſion to material things (which they ſuppoſed to be in men's power either ſo to correct and caſtigate, as to prevent any ſin in them, or elſe to purſue in a way of vice) are, if not the form and eſſence, yet at leaſt the original and root of that *maſs of evil* *, of which they ſo much ſpeak. But of this in another place.

All this we have further confirmed out of *Nachmanides*, an author ſufficiently verſed in all matters concerning the *Jewiſh* religion. His words are theſe, in his comment upon Deut. xxx. 13. " From the time of the " creation, man had a power of free-will within him " to do good or evil, according to his own choice, as " alſo thro' the whole time of the law; that ſo he " might be capable of merit, in freely chuſing what is " good, and of puniſhment, in electing what is evil." Wherein that he tells us, that this free-will hath continued ever ſince the creation, we muſt not underſtand rigidly the very moment of man's creation, but that *epocha* taken with ſome latitude, ſo that it may include the time of man's firſt tranſgreſſion: for he after ſuggeſts thus much, That, before the firſt ſin, *Adam*'s power to good was a mere natural power, without any ſuch indifferency to evil; and therefore he makes that ſtate

* יצר הרע

ſtate of *Adam* the model and platform of future perfection, which the moſt antient *Jewiſh* authors ſeem to expect in the time of their *Meſſiah*, which he expreſſeth in this manner: "He ſhall not covet nor deſire (after "a ſenſitive manner), but man ſhall return in the "times of the *Meſſiah* to that primitive ſtate he was in "before the ſin of the firſt man, who naturally did "whatſoever was good, neither was there any thing "and its contrary then in his choice." Upon which ground he afterwards concludes, That, in thoſe times of the *Meſſiah*, there ſhall neither be merit nor demerit; becauſe there ſhall be no free-will, which is the alone mother and nurſe of both of them: but, in the mean while, that good or evil are to men, non-prejudicing, or in the leaſt degree hindering the exerciſe of this liberty, neither from within nor from without, *none either in heaven or in earth* *. And thus the ſame *Nachmanides* expounds that ſolemn atteſtation, Deut. xxx. 19. wherein heaven and earth are called to witneſs, that that day life and death were ſet before them; as if God himſelf had now eſtabliſhed ſuch a monarchical power in man, which heaven and earth ſhould be in league withall and faithful to.

Hereupon *R. Saadia Gaon* (ſo called by way of eminency) doubts not to tell us, that the common ſenſe of all the *Jewiſh* Doctors was, That this liberty to good or evil was ſuch an abſolute kind of authority eſtabliſhed in a man's ſoul, that it was in a ſort independent upon God himſelf; this being, as he ſaith, the meaning of that old and vulgar maxim amongſt the *Jews*, ſometimes mentioned in the *Talmud*, *All things are in the hand of Heaven, but the fear of the Lord* †.

I am not ignorant that there is another axiom of the *Jews* as common, which may ſeem partly to croſs this and what hitherto hath been ſpoken, *viz. That aſſiſtance*



* That I may phraſe it in the language of the *Stoic*, ἀλύτερα, ἀκώλυτα, ἀπαρεμπόδιστα.

† In the book called *Sepher emunah*, יש כל בידי השמים חוץ מיראת השמים

*is perpetually afforded to all endeavours both of ſanctity and impiety* *. But *Maimonides* † hath ſomewhere told us, that they mean nothing elſe by it but this, That, when men endeavour after the performance of the law, God, in a way of providence, furniſheth them with external matter and means, giving them peace and riches, and other outward accommodations, whereby they might have advantage and opportunity to perform all that good to which their own free-will determines them: whereas wicked men find the like help of external matter and means for promoting and accompliſhing their wicked and ungodly deſigns.

Thus we ſee how the *Jews*, that they might lay a foundation of merit, and build up the ſtately and magnificent fabric of their happineſs upon the ſandy foundation of a dead letter without them, endeavour to ſtrengthen it by as weak a rampart of their own ſelf-ſufficiency, and the power of their own free-will, able (as they vainly imagined), to perform all righteouſneſs, as being adequate and commenſurate to the whole law of God in its moſt extenſive and comprehenſive ſenſe and meaning; rather looking upon the fall of man as the riſe of that giant-like free-will, whereby they were enabled to bear up themſelves againſt heaven itſelf, as being a great acceſſory to their happineſs, rather than prejudicial to it, thro' the acceſs of that multitude of divine laws which were given to them; as we ſhall ſee afterwards. And ſo they reckoned upon a more triumphant and illuſtrious kind of happineſs victoriouſly to be atchieved by the merit of their own works, than that beggarly kind of happineſs (as they ſeem to look upon it), which cometh like an alms from divine bounty. Accordingly they affirm, *That happineſs, by way of reward, is far greater and much more magnificent than that which is by way of mercy.*

CHAP.

* מסייעין אותו בא ליטמא פותחין לו

† As I remember in his *Sepher Hamedang*.

## CHAP. III.

THE ſecond ground of that *Jewiſh* notion of a legal righteouſneſs is this, "That the law deli-
" vered to them upon mount *Sinai* was a ſufficient diſ-
" penſation from God, and all that needed to be done
" by him for the advancing of them to a ſtate of perfe-
" ction and bleſſedneſs; and that the proper ſcope and
" end of their law was nothing but to afford them ſe-
" veral ways and means of merit." Which is expreſs-ly delivered in the *Miſhnah**, "That therefore the pre-
" cepts of the law were ſo many in number, that ſo
" they might ſingle out where they pleaſed, and in ex-
" erciſing themſelves therein procure eternal life;" as *Obadiah de Bartenora* expounds it, *That whoſoever ſhall perform any one of the* 613 *precepts of the law* (for ſo many they make in number) *without any wordly reſpects, for love of the precept, behold, this man ſhall merit thereby everlaſting life* †. For indeed they ſuppoſed a reward due to the performance of every precept, which reward they ſuppoſed to be increaſed according to the ſecret eſtimation which God himſelf hath of any precept, as we find ſuggeſted in the following words: "Be careful to obſerve the leſſer precept as well as the
" greater; becauſe thou knoweſt not the reward that
" ſhall be given to the obſervation of the precepts ‡."

Here we muſt take notice that this was a great debate among the *Jews*, which precepts they were that had the greateſt reward due to the performance of them; in which controverſy *Maimonides*, in his comment upon this place, thus reſolves us, That the meaſure of the reward that was annexed to the negative precepts might



* &c. רצה הקבה לזבות את ישראל Lib. *Maccoth*, ſect. ult.

† הנה זכה בה לחיי עולם הבא

‡ In the *Miſhnah*, in the book *Pirke avoth*, in the words of the famous *R. Jehuda*.

be collected from the meaſure of the puniſhments which were conſequent upon the breach of them. But this knot could not be ſo well ſolved in reference to the affirmative precepts; becauſe the puniſhments annexed to the breach of them were more rarely defined in the law: accordingly he expreſſeth himſelf to this ſenſe: "As for the affirmative precepts, it is not expreſſed "what reward is due to every one of them; and all "for this end, that we may not know which precept "is moſt neceſſary to be obſerved, and which precept "is of leſs neceſſity and importance." And, a little after, he tells us, that for this reaſon their wiſe men ſaid, *That he who endeavours to obſerve the precept, is free from it*; which he expounds to this ſenſe, That whoſoever ſhall exerciſe himſelf about any one precept, ought without heſitation or diſpute to continue in the performance of it, as being in the mean while freed from minding any other. For, if God had declared which precepts himſelf had moſt valued and ſettled the greateſt revenue of happineſs upon, then other precepts would have been leſs minded; and any one that ſhould have buſied himſelf in a precept of a lower nature, would preſently have left that, when opportunity ſhould have been offered of performing a higher. And hence we have alſo another *Talmudical* canon for the performing of precepts, of the ſame nature with the former, quoted by our foreſaid author, *It is not lawful to paſs over precepts*, that is, as he expounds it, "When a man is "about to obſerve one precept, he may not paſs over "and relinquiſh that, in order to apply himſelf to the "obſervation of another." And thus, as the performance of any precept hath a certain reward annexed to it, ſo the meaſure of the reward they ſuppoſe to be increaſed according to the number of thoſe precepts which they obſerve, *If thou haſt been much in the ſtudy of the law, thou ſhalt be rewarded much: for faithful is thy Lord*

* העוסק במצוה פטור מן המצוה *Qui operam dat præcepto, liber eſt a præcepto.*

† אין מעבירין על המצות

*Lord and Maſter who ſhall render to thee a reward proportionable to thy work* *. And a little before we have the ſame thing in the words of another of their maſters, *He who increaſes the law, increaſes life*†. And leſt they ſhould not yet be liberal enough of God's coſt, they are alſo pleaſed to diſtribute rewards to any *Iſraelite* that ſhall abſtain from the breach of a precept ‡; *Whoſoever keeps himſelf from the breach of a precept, ſhall receive the reward as if he had kept the precept* ‖.

But this which hath been ſaid concerning the performance of any one precept, muſt be underſtood with this caution, that the performance of ſuch a precept be a continued thing, ſo as that it may compound and collect the performance of many good works into itſelf; otherwiſe the ſingle performance of any one precept is only available, according to the ſenſe of the *Talmudical* maſters, to caſt the ſcale, when a man's good works and evil works equally ballance one another, as *Maimonides* tells us, in his comment upon the forenamed *Miſhnah l. Kidd.* cap. 1. ſect. 10. Where the words of the *Jewiſh* Doctors are theſe §, " He that obſerves any one pre-
" cept, it ſhall be well with him, and his days ſhall be
" prolonged, and he ſhall poſſeſs the earth: but he that
" obſerves not any one precept, it ſhall not be well with
" him, nor ſhall his days be prolonged, nor ſhall he in-
" herit the earth." Which words are thus expounded by *Maimonides*, " He that obſerves any one precept, *&c.*
" that is, ſo as that by the addition of this work to his
" other good works, his good works overweigh his evil
" works, and his merits preponderate his demerits."

For the better underſtanding whereof we muſt know, That the *Jewiſh* doctors are wont to diſtinguiſh of three ſorts of men, which are thus ranked by them, *Men perfectly righteous*, *men perfectly wicked*, and *a middle ſort*



* As it is defined by *R. Tarphon* in the foreſaid *Miſhnah*. c. 2. &c. אם למרת תורה הרבה נותנין לך שכר תורה מרבה חיים.

‡ So we find it in the *Miſhnah L. Kidduſhin*.

§ העושה נותנים לו שכר כעושה מצוה בל מצוה אחת &c.

*of men betwixt them.* *. Thoſe they are wont to call *perfectly righteous*, who had no tranſgreſſion or demerits that might be counted fit to be put into the balance againſt their merits; and thoſe they called *ſimply righteous*, whoſe merits outweighed their demerits: whereas on the other ſide the *perfectly wicked* in their ſenſe were ſuch as had no merits at all; and thoſe *ſimply wicked*, whoſe demerits made the weightieſt ſcale: and the *middle ſort* were ſuch as their good deeds and evil deeds equally balanced one another. Of this firſt ſort of men, *viz. the perfectly righteous*, they ſuppoſed there might be many; and ſuch the Phariſees ſeem to have been in their own eſteem, in our Saviour's time. And according to this notion our Saviour may ſeem to have ſhaped his anſwer to that young man in the goſpel, who aſked him, *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* To which our Saviour anſwers, *Keep the commandments*: which our Saviour propounds to him in ſo great a latitude, as thereby to take him off from his ſelf-conceit, and that he might be convinced, upon reflection on himſelf, that he had fallen ſhort of eternal life, in failing of a due performance of the divine law. But he inſiſting upon his own merit in this reſpect, inquires of our Saviour whether there be yet any thing wanting to make him *one perfectly righteous*. To this our Saviour replies, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come and follow me*, Matth. xix. 21. The meaning of which reply may, as I conceive, be this, to convince him from his over-eager love of this world, that his obedience to the law of God, and his compliance with its precepts, were imperfect. But, *ſecondly*, for thoſe that were in *the middle rank* of men, the *Jewiſh* Doctors had divers rules, as, 1. In caſe a man's evil works and good were equal, the addition of one either way might determine them to eternal life or miſery. 2. That in caſe a man's evil works ſhould preponderate and weigh down his good, yet he may caſt the ſcale by repentance, if he will; or in the other world by chaſtiſements and puniſhments

* צדקים גמורים רשעים גמורים בינונים

puniſhments he may make expiation for them. Theſe and the like ways they have found out, leſt any of their fraternity ſhould miſcarry. To all which we muſt take in this caution, which they are pleaſed to deliver to us, *viz.* That men's works have their different weight; ſome good works being ſo weighty that they may weigh in the balance againſt many evil works, and *vice verſâ*.

All which we find largely ſet down by their authors *, who alſo tell us of other expedients provided by their law for the ſecuring of merit and happineſs, which I ſhall not here mention. And indeed they have found out ſo many artifices to entail a legal righteouſneſs and eternal happineſs upon all the *Iſraelites*, that (if it be poſſible) none might be left out of heaven: as may partly appear by that queſtion captiouſly propoſed to our Saviour, *Maſter, are there few that ſhall be ſaved?* Matth. xii. 22. whereby they expected to enſnare him, they themſelves holding a general ſalvation of all the *Jews* by virtue of the law, however their wickedneſs might abound. Which we find expreſsly ſet down by *Maimonides* in the fore-named place. "All wicked "ones whoſe evil deeds exceed their good deeds, ſhall "be judged according to the meaſure of their evil "deeds ſo exceeding; and afterwards they ſhall have "a portion in the world to come; for that all *Iſraelites* "have a portion in the world to come, and this not-"withſtanding their ſins." Now that maxim of theirs, *All* Iſraelites *have a portion in the world to come*, is taken out of the *Miſhnah* †, where it is put down as the moſt authentic opinion of the *Jewiſh* Doctors; only ſome few there are there recited who are excepted from this happineſs; otherwiſe their greateſt malefactors are not excepted from it; for ſo *Obadias de Bartenora* unfoldeth their

* *R. Albo*, lib. *de fundamentis fidei*, and partly by *R. Saadia*, but eſpecially by *Maimonides* in his *treatiſe of repentance*, chap. 3.

† Lib. *Sanhedr.* chap. 11.

their meaning, "even ſuch as are judged by the great "*Sanhedrin* worthy of death for their wickedneſs, theſe "have a portion in the world to come *."

By the way, we may obſerve what a ſpiritleſs religion this of the *Jews* was, and how it was nothing elſe but a ſoulleſs and lifeleſs form of external performances, which did little or nothing at all reach the inward man, being a mere bodily kind of drudgery and ſervility: and therefore our Saviour, when he models out religion to them, he points them out to ſomething fuller of inward life and ſpirit, and ſuch a one as might make them perfect, *as their father in heaven is perfect*, Matth. v. 48. Such dull heavy-ſpirited principles, as this *Talmudical* doctrine we have quoted, affordeth us, very probably began to poſſeſs the chair in the days of *Antigonus*, who therefore put in this caution againſt part of it, That God was not to be ſerved ſo much upon the account of merit and for hope of wages, as out of love; tho' his Diſciples *Sadoc* and *Baithus*, the founders of the ſect of the *Sadducees*, ſtraining that ſober principle too far, might more ſtrengthen that mercenary belief amongſt the other Doctors which they had before entertained.

But before I leave this argument, it may not be amiſs to examine alſo what the *Cabbaliſtical Jews* thought concerning this matter in hand; which in ſum is this, "That the law delivered upon *Mount Sinai* was "a device God had to unite the *Jews* and the "*Schechinah*, or divine preſence, together." Therefore they are pleaſed to ſtyle it *the treaſures of life* †. And as if the living God could be united to the ſouls of men by

* I know here that the notion of *the world to come* is differently repreſented by *Nachmanides* and *Maimonides*, and their followers. But whether *Maimonides* his ſect or the other prevail in this point, it is not much material as to our preſent buſineſs, ſeeing both ſides conclude, that this world to come, points out ſuch a ſtate of happineſs, as ſhould not revolve or ſlide back again into miſery.

† In the book *Zohar* (which is one of the antienteſt monuments we have of the *Jewiſh* learning.)

by ſuch *a dead letter* as this was, (as it is ſtyled by the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. iii.) they are pleaſed to make this external adminiſtration the great tye between God and man. And to this purpoſe *R. Simeon Ben Jochai* (the compiler of the fore-quoted book, which is a myſtical comment upon the *Pentateuch*) diſcourſeth upon thoſe words Deut. xxx. 20. *He is thy life, and the length of thy days*; upon which he grounds this obſervation, "The *Schechinah* or divine preſence is no where eſtabliſh-"ed but by the mediation of the law:" and a little after he thus magnifies the ſtudy of the law, "who-"ſoever doth exerciſe himſelf in the law, doth merit "the poſſeſſion of the upper inheritance which is in the "holy kingdom above; and doth alſo merit the poſ-"ſeſſion of an inheritance here below in this world." Where by the way we may take notice that the antient *Jews* looked upon the inheritances of the land of *Canaan* as being typical and ſignificative of an higher inheritance in the kingdom of heaven: both which they ſuppoſed to be the due rewards of men's works: and therefore they talk ſo much in the ſame place of guardian angels which are continually paſſing to and fro between heaven and earth, as the heralds and meſſengers of mens good works to God in heaven. And further upon thoſe words in Levit. xviii. 5. *Ye ſhall keep my ſtatutes and judgments; which if a man do, he ſhall live in them*, he tells us, "That the portion of *Iſrael* is "meritorious, becauſe that the holy bleſſed one delight-"eth in them above all the idolatrous nations; and "out of his favour and goodneſs to them, gave them "the laws of truth, and planted amongſt them the tree of "life; and the *Schechinah* was with them. Now what "doth all this ſignify? thus much, that ſince the "*Iſraelites* are ſigned with the holy ſeal in their fleſh, "they are thereby acknowledged for the Sons of God: "as on the contrary, they that are not ſealed with this "mark in their fleſh, are not the ſons of God, but are "the children of uncleanneſs: wherefore it is not law-"ful to contract familiarity with them, or to teach them "the words of the law." Which afterwards is urged further

further by another of their maſters, "Whoſoever inſtruc-
"teth any uncircumciſed perſon, tho' but in the leaſt
"precepts of the law, doth the ſame as if he ſhould de-
"ſtroy the world, and deny the name of the holy bleſ-
"ſed one."

All which plainly amounts to thus much (as we had before out of the *Talmudiſts*,) that the law was given unto the *Iſraelites* for this purpoſe, to enrich them with good works, and to augment their merits, and ſo to eſtabliſh the foundations of life and bleſſedneſs amongſt them; and to make it a medium of the union betwixt God and men, as *R. Eliezer* in the ſame book ſpeaketh of the near union between theſe three, *the holy bleſſed one, the law, and Iſrael.*

There is one paſſage more in our fore-named author *R. Simeon Ben Jochai* *, which though it be more myſtical than the reſt, yet, may be well worth our obſerving, as more fully hinting the perfection of the law, and ſetting that forth as an abſolute and complete medium of rendering a man perfect †; thus therefore, as if the law was the great magazine and ſtore houſe of perfection, our foreſaid author there telleth us, "That when
"the *Iſraelites* ſtood upon Mount *Sinai*, they ſaw God
"eye to eye, or face to face, and underſtood all ſecrets
"of the law, and all the *hidden things above and be-*
"*neath*:" and then he adds, "That the ſame day
"in which the *Iſraelites* ſtood upon Mount *Sinai*, all
"uncleanneſs paſſed away from them, and all their
"bodies did ſhine in brightneſs like to the angels of
"heaven when they put on their bright ſhining robes
"to fit themſelves for the embaſſy upon which they are
"ſent by God their Lord." And a little after, thus;
"And when their uncleanneſs paſſed away from them,
"the bodies of the *Iſraelites* became ſhining and clear
"without any defilement; and their bodies did ſhine
"as the brightneſs of the firmament." And then thus concludeth all, "When the *Iſraelites* received the law
"upon

* At the end of *Paraſhah Jethro.*

† Upon which *R. Joſ. Albo* in his third book *de fundamentis* hath ſpent two or three chapters.

" upon Mount *Sinai*, the world was then perfumed with " a moſt aromatic ſmell, and heaven and earth were " eſtabliſhed, and the holy bleſſed One was known " above and below, and he aſcended in his glory a- " bove all things."

By all which myſtical and allegorical expreſſions our Author ſeems to aim at this main ſcope, *viz.* To ſet forth the law as that which of itſelf was ſufficient, without any other diſpenſation from God, for the perfecting of thoſe to whom it was diſpenſed; and to make them comprehenſors of all righteouſneſs here, and glory hereafter: Which they are wont to ſet forth in that tranſcendent ſtate of perfection which the *Iſraelites* were in at the receiving of the law; whence it hath been an antient maxim amongſt them, *The Iſraelites, when they ſtood upon Mount* Sinai, *were like the miniſtering angels.*

And thus we have endeavoured to make good that which we firſt propounded, namely, to ſhew that the grand opinion of the *Jews* concerning the way to life and happineſs was this, *viz.*

" That the law of God externally diſpenſed, and " only furniſhed out to them in tables of ſtone and a " parchment-roll, conjoined with the power of their " own free-will, was ſufficient both to procure them " acceptance with God, and to acquire merit enough " to carry them with ſpread ſails into the harbour of " eternal reſt and bleſſedneſs."

So that by this time we may ſee that thoſe diſputes which St. *Paul* and other Apoſtles maintain againſt the *Jews* touching the law and faith, were not merely about that one queſtion, Whether juſtification formally and preciſely reſpects faith alone; but were of a much greater latitude.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

HAving done with the firſt inquiry, we now come to the ſecond, which was this, *What the evangelical righteouſneſs* or *the righteouſneſs of faith is, which the Apoſtle ſets up againſt that of the law, and in what notion the law is conſidered by the Apoſtle*: Which briefly was this, *viz.* That the law was the miniſtry of death, and in itſelf an external and lifeleſs thing; neither could it procure or beget that divine life and ſpiritual form of godlineſs in the ſouls of men, which God expects from all the heirs of glory, nor that glory which is only conſequent upon a true divine life. Whereas, on the other ſide, the goſpel is ſet forth as a mighty emanation of life and ſpirit freely iſſuing forth from an omnipotent ſource of grace and love, as that true God-like vital influence whereby the Divinity derives itſelf into the ſouls of men, enlivening and transforming them into its own likeneſs, and ſtrongly imprinting upon them a copy of its own beauty and goodneſs. In a word, It is that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we in him.

But that we may the more diſtinctly unfold the difference between that *righteouſneſs which is of the law*, and that *which is of faith*, and ſo the better ſhew how the Apoſtle undermines that fabric of happineſs which the Jews had built up for themſelves; we ſhall obſerve *Firſt* in general, That the main thing which the Apoſtle endeavours to beat down was, that proud and arrogant conceit which they had of merit, and to advance againſt it the notion of the divine grace and bounty as the only fountain of all righteouſneſs and happineſs. For indeed that at which all thoſe *Jewiſh* notions of which we have before taken notice, principally aim, was the advancing of the weakened powers of nature into ſuch a height of perfection as might render them capable of meriting at God's hand: and that perfection of which they ſpeak ſo much (as is evident from what hath been ſaid) was nothing elſe but a mere ſublima-

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tion of their own natural powers and principles, performed by the ſtrength of their own fancies. And therefore theſe contractors with heaven were ſo pleaſed to look upon eternal life as a fair purchaſe which they might make for themſelves at their own charge; as if the ſpring and riſe of all were in themſelves: their eyes were ſo much dazzled with thoſe fooliſh fires of merit and reward kindled in their own fancies, that they could not ſee that light of divine grace and bounty which ſhone about them.

And this arrogance and ſwelling pride of theirs (if I miſtake not) is that which St. *Paul* principally endeavours to chaſtiſe in advancing faith ſo much as he doth in oppoſition to the works of the law. For which purpoſe he ſpends the firſt and ſecond chapters of this epiſtle to the *Romans* in drawing up a charge of ſuch a nature both againſt Gentiles and *Jews*, but principally againſt the *Jews*, who were the grand Juſtitiaries, that might make them bethink themſelves of imploring mercy, and of laying aſide all plea of law and juſtice; and ſo chap. iii. 27. he ſhuts up all with a ſevere check to ſuch preſumptuous arrogance, *where then is boaſting?* This ſeems then to be the main end at which St. *Paul* every where aims in oppoſing faith to the works of the law, namely to eſtabliſh the foundation of righteouſneſs and happineſs upon the free mercy and grace of God: the glorifying and magnifying of which in the real manifeſtations of it he holds forth upon all occaſions, as the deſign of the goſpel-adminiſtration; ſeeing it is impoſſible for men by any works which they can perform to ſatisfy God's juſtice for thoſe ſins which they have committed againſt him, or truly to comply with his divine will, without his divine aſſiſtance. So that the method of reconciling men to God, and reducing of ſtraying ſouls back again to him, was to be attributed wholly to another original than that which the *Jews* imagined. But,

*Secondly*, That righteouſneſs of faith which the Apoſtle ſets up againſt the law, and compares with it, is indeed in its own nature a vital and ſpiritual adminiſtration, wherein God converſeth with man; whereas the

law was merely an external or dead thing in itſelf, not able to beget any true divine life in the ſouls of men. All that legal righteouſneſs which the Jews boaſted ſo much of, was but from the earth, earthly; conſiſting merely in external performances, and ſo falling extremely ſhort of that internal and God-like frame of ſpirit which is neceſſary for a true conjunction and union of the ſouls of men with God, and making of them capable of true bleſſedneſs.

But that we may the more diſtinctly handle this argument, we ſhall endeavour to unfold the true difference between the law and the goſpel, as it ſeems evidently to be laid down every where by St. *Paul* in his epiſtles: and the difference between them is clearly this, *viz.* That the law was merely an external thing, conſiſting in ſuch precepts which had only an outward adminiſtration; but the goſpel is an internal thing, a vital form and principle ſeating itſelf in the minds and ſpirits of men. And this is the moſt proper and formal difference between the law and the goſpel, that the one is conſidered only as an external adminiſtration, and the other as an internal. And therefore the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. iii. 6. 7. calls the law *the miniſtration of the letter* and *of death*, it being in itſelf but a dead letter; as all that which is without a man's ſoul muſt needs be. But on the other ſide he calls the goſpel (becauſe of the intrinſical and vital adminiſtration thereof in living impreſſions upon the ſouls of men) *the miniſtration of the Spirit* and *the miniſtration of righteouſneſs*. By which he cannot mean the hiſtory of the goſpel, or thoſe things propounded to us for our belief; for this would make the goſpel itſelf as much an external thing as the law was, and according to the external adminiſtration as much a killing or dead letter as the law was: and ſo we ſee that the preaching of *Chriſt crucified* was *to the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 23. But indeed he means a vital efflux from God upon the ſouls of men, whereby they are *made partakers of life and ſtrength* from him: and therefore (ver. 7.) he thus exegetically expounds his own meaning of that ſhort deſcription

ſcription of the law, namely, that * *it was a dead* (or *lifeleſs*) *adminiſtration*, or elſe *an adminiſtration of death exhibited in letters, and engraven in tables of ſtone:* and therefore he tells us (ver. 6.) what the effect of it was in thoſe words, *the letter killeth*, as indeed all external precepts which have not a proper vital radication in the ſouls of men, whereby they are able to ſecure them from the tranſgreſſion of them, muſt needs do. Now to this dead or killing letter he oppoſes (ver. 8.) *a quickning ſpirit*, or *the miniſtration of the ſpirit*, which afterwards (v. 9) he expounds by *the miniſtration of righteouſneſs*, that is, the evangelical adminiſtration. So that the goſpel or evangelical adminiſtration muſt be an internal impreſſion, a lively energetical ſpirit and principle of righteouſneſs in the ſouls of men, whereby they are inwardly enabled to expreſs a real conformity thereto. Upon this ground the Apoſtle further purſues the effects of both theſe from the 14. verſe to the end.

By all which the Apoſtle means to ſet forth to us how vaſt a difference there is between the external manifeſtations of God in a law of commandments, and thoſe internal appearances of God whereby he diſcovers the mighty power of his goodneſs to the ſouls of men.

Though the hiſtory and outward communication of the goſpel to us in the written word, is to be always acknowledged as a ſpecial mercy and advantage, and certainly no leſs privilege to Chriſtians than it was to the *Jews* to be the depoſitaries of the oracles of God: yet 'tis plain that the Apoſtle, where he compares the law and the goſpel, and in other places, doth by the goſpel mean ſomething which is more than a piece of book-learning, or an hiſtorical narration of the free love of God in the ſeveral contrivances of it for the redemption of mankind. For if this were all that is meant properly by the goſpel, I ſee no reaſon why it ſhould not be coun-



* διακονία τῦ θανάτυ ἐν γράμμασιν, ἐντετυπωμένη ἐν λίθοις. for ſo ſometime by an Hebraiſm the genitive caſe *in regimine* is put for the adjective.

ted as weak and impotent a thing, as dead a letter as the law was, (as we intimated before;) and ſo there would be no ſuch vaſt difference between them as the Apoſtle aſſerts there is; the one being properly an external declaration of God's will, the other an internal *manifeſtation of divine life upon men's ſouls:* and therefore Gal. iii. 21. he ſo diſtinguiſheth between this double diſpenſation of God, that this evangelical diſpenſation is a vital and quickning thing, able to beget a ſoul and form of divine goodneſs upon the ſouls of men; which becauſe the law could not do, it was laid aſide, as being inſufficient to reſtore man to the favour of God, or to make him partaker of his righteouſneſs. *If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law*; where by *righteouſneſs* he ſeems to mean the ſame thing which he meant by it when in his epiſtle to the *Corinthians* he calls the œconomy of the goſpel, *the miniſtration of righteouſneſs*, 2 Cor. iii. 9. or as זכות is taken among the Jewiſh writers for acceptance with God, and that internal form of righteouſneſs that qualifies the ſoul for eternal life: and ſo he takes it in a far more large and ample ſenſe than that external righteouſneſs of juſtification is: and indeed it ſeems to expreſs the juſt ſtate of thoſe who are renewed by the Spirit of God, and made partakers of that divine life which is emphatically called the ſeed of God. For this righteouſneſs of which he here ſpeaks, is the proper reſult of an enlivening and quickening law, which is this new law of the goſpel in oppoſition to that old law which was adminiſtred only in the written word: and therefore this new law is called in the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, chap. viii. 6. *the better covenant*, whereas the old was faulty. In which place this is put down as the formal difference between the legal and evangelical adminiſtration, or the old and new covenant, That the old covenant was only externally promulged and wrapt up as it were in ink and parchment, or, at beſt, engraven upon tables of ſtone; whereas this new covenant is ſet forth in living characters imprinted upon the vital powers of

of men's ſouls, as we have ver. 10, 11. *This is the covenant that I will make*, &c. *I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts:* and therefore the old covenant is v. 7. ſaid not to be an unblamable or faultleſs thing, becauſe it was not able to keep off tranſgreſſions, or hinder the violation of itſelf, no more than an inſcription upon ſome pillar or monument is able to inſpire life into thoſe that read it and converſe with it: the old law or covenant being in this reſpect no other than all other civil conſtitutions are, which receive their efficacy meerly from the willing compliance of men's minds with them; ſo that they being dead things in themſelves, muſt be enlivened by the ſubject that receives them. But the evangelical or new law is ſuch a thing as is an efflux of life and power from God himſelf the original thereof, and produceth life whereſoever it comes. And to this double diſpenſation, *viz.* of law and goſpel, doth St. Paul clearly refer. *You are the epiſtle of Chriſt, miniſtred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of ſtone*: 2 Cor. iii. 3. which laſt words are a plain gloſs upon that mundane kind of adminiſtring the law in a mere external way, to which he oppoſeth the goſpel. And this argument he further purſues in the 7th and 8th chapters of the epiſtle to the *Romans*, in which laſt chapter ver. 2. he ſtiles the goſpel *the law of the ſpirit of life*, which was able to deſtroy the power of ſin, and introduce ſuch a ſpiritual and heavenly frame of ſoul into men, as whereby they might be enabled to expreſs a chearful compliance with the law of God, and demonſtrate a true heavenly converſation and God-like life in this world.

We read in *Iamblichus* and others, of the many preparatory experiments uſed by *Pythagoras* to try his ſcholars, whether they were fit to receive the more ſublime and ſacred portions of his philoſophy; and that he was wont to communicate theſe only to ſouls in a due degree purified and prepared for ſuch doctrine; * and what did all this ſignify but only this, that he



* μετὰ ψυχῆς μυήσεως ϗ καθαρμοῦ.

might by all theſe methods work and mould the minds of his hearers into ſuch a fit temper, as that he might the better ſtamp the ſeal of his more divine doctrine upon them, and that his diſcourſes to them, *of things juſt and lovely, and good* *, might be written, *truly and really in the ſoul* †, that I may uſe the words of *Plato*, where he commends the impreſſions of truth which are made upon men's ſouls above all outward writings, which he therefore compares to dead pictures. By this we ſee what the wiſeſt and beſt philoſophers thought of this internal writing; but it peculiarly belongs to God to write the laws of goodneſs in the tables of men's hearts. All the outward teachings of men are but dead things in themſelves. But God's imprinting his mind and will upon men's hearts is properly that which is called the teaching of God, and then they become living laws written in the living tables of men's hearts, fitted to receive and retain divine impreſſions ‡.

And that we may come a little nearer to theſe words upon which all this preſent diſcourſe is built, this ſeems to be the ſcope of his argument in this place, where this law of righteouſneſs may fairly be paralleled with that which before he called *the law of the ſpirit*, and which he therefore calls *the righteouſneſs of faith*, becauſe it is received from God in a way of believing. For I cannot eaſily think that he ſhould mean nothing elſe in this place, but merely the righteouſneſs of Juſtification, as ſome would perſuade us, but rather that his ſenſe is much more comprehenſive, ſo as to include the ſtate of goſpel-diſpenſation, which includes not only *pardon of ſins*, but *an inward ſpirit of love, power, and of a ſound mind*, as he expreſſeth it, 2 Tim. i. 7. And this he thus oppoſeth to the law, Rom. x. 6. and vii. 8. *But the righteouſneſs of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe; Say not in thy heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? But what ſaith it? The word*

* περὶ δικαίων τε καὶ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν.

† τῷ ὄντι ἐν ψυχῇ.

‡ I ſhall only add that ſpeech of *Crollius* the chymiſt not impertinent in this place, *Non tam diſcendo quam patiendo, divina perficitur mens humana.*

*word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach.* In which words, *Cunæus*, in his treatiſe *De Repub. Hebr.* would have us to underſtand ſome *Cabbala* or tradition amongſt the *Jews* for this meaning of that place, Deut. xxx. 12. from which theſe words are borrowed, which, as they there ſtand, ſeem not to carry that evangelical ſenſe, according to which St. *Paul* expounds them; tho' yet *Cunæus* hath not given us any reaſon for this opinion of his. But indeed the *Jewiſh* writers generally, who were acquainted with the principles of the *Cabbala*, commenting upon that place, do wholly refer it to the times of the *Meſſiah*, making it parallel with that place of *Jeremy*, which defines the new covenant to be *a writing of the law of God in mens hearts*, Jerem. xxxi. 33. And thus that life and ſalvation which reſults from the righteouſneſs of faith is all, as faith itſelf is, derived from God, gratuitouſly diſpenſing himſelf to the minds of men: whereas, if life could have been by the law, its original and principle muſt have been reſolved into men themſelves, who muſt have acted that dead matter without them, and have produced that virtue and energy in it, by their exerciſing themſelves therein, which, of itſelf, it had not; as the obſervance of any law enables that law itſelf to diſpenſe that reward which is due to the obſervance of it: and therefore the righteouſneſs of the law was ſo defined, that *he that did thoſe things ſhould live in them.* And thus the New Teſtament every where ſeems to preſent to us this twofold diſpenſation or œconomy, the one conſiſting in an external and written law of precepts, the other in inward life and power *.

Now, from all this we may eaſily apprehend how much the righteouſneſs of the goſpel tranſcends that of

* Which St. *Auſtin* hath well purſued in his book *De Litera et Spiritu*, from whom *Aquinas* (who endeavours to tread in his foot-ſteps) ſeems to have taken firſt of all an occaſion of moving that queſtion, *Utrum lex nova ſit lex ſcripta, vel lex indita*; and thus reſolves it, That the new law or goſpel is not properly *lex ſcripta*, as the old was, but *lex indita*: and that the old law is *foris ſcripta*, the other *intus ſcripta*, written in the tables of the heart.

of the law, in that it hath indeed a true command over the inward man which it acts and informs; whereas the law, by all its menaces and punishments, could only compell men to an external observance of it in the outward man; as the schoolmen have well observed, *The old law binds the hand; the new law, the heart* *.

And herein St. *Paul* every where magnifies this dispensation of the free mercy and grace of God, as being the only sovereign remedy against all the inward and rooted maladies of sin and corruption, as that balsam of life which is the universal restaurative of decayed nature. So he tells us, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion, because we are not under the law, but under grace.* And this is that which made him so much extol his acquaintance with Christ in the dispensation of grace, and to despise all things as loss, Philip iii. 8. where, among his other *Jewish* privileges, having reckoned up his blamelesness in all points touching the law, he undervalues them all, and counts all but loss, *for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.* In which place the Apostle doth not mean to disparage a real inward righteousness, and the strict observance of the law; but his meaning is to shew how poor and worthless a thing all outward observances of the law are in comparison of a true internal conformity to Christ, in the renovation of the mind and soul according to his image and likeness; as is manifest from v. 9, 10. *&c.* in which he thus emphatically delivers his own meaning of that knowledge of Christ which he so much extolled, *That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is thro' the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Where, by the way, we may further take notice what this *righteousness of faith* and *the righteousness of God*, (of which we have already spoke much) is, according to his own true meaning, as he expounds himself, *viz.* a Christ-like nature in a man's soul, or Christ appearing in the minds of men by the mighty power of his divine Spirit, and thereby deriving a true participation of himself to them, so

* *Lex vetus ligat manum, lex nova ligat animum.*

ſo we have it, v. 10. *That I may know the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* And thus Chriſt and *Moſes* are oppoſed, as Chriſt is the diſpenſer of grace and truth, of God's free and gratuitous bounty, of life and ſubſtance: whereas *Moſes* was but the miniſter of the law, of rites and ſhadows.

But it may perhaps be queſtioned whether the ſame internal diſpenſation of God was not as well under the law, as ſince our Saviour's coming; and ſo, conſequently, that the *Jews* were equally partakers thereof; and ſo it could be no new thing to them.

To all which I might reply, That this diſpenſation of grace was then a more myſtical thing, and not ſo manifeſted to the world as it hath been ſince our Saviour's coming. *Secondly*, This diſpenſation of free-grace was not that which properly belonged to the nation of the *Jews*, but only a type and ſhadow of it.

For the fuller underſtanding of which, and all that hath been ſpoken, we muſt know, That, before our Saviour's coming, the great myſteries of religion being wrapt up in hieroglyphics and ſymbolical rites, (the unfolding of all which was reſerved for him who is the great Interpreter of heaven and Maſter of truth) God was pleaſed to draw forth a ſcheme or copy of all that divine œconomy and method of his commerce with mankind, and to make a draught of the whole artifice thereof in external matter: and therefore he ſingled out a company and ſociety of men of the ſame common extraction, marked out from all other ſorts of men by a character of genealogical ſanctity (for ſo circumciſion was), collected and united together by a common band of brotherhood; and this he ſet up as an emblem of a divine and holy ſeed or ſociety of men which are all by way of ſpiritual generation deſcended from himſelf. And hence it is that the *Jews* (the whole *Jewiſh* nation univerſally conſidered) who were but a mere repreſentative of this ſpiritual fraternity and congregation, are called the *holy ſeed*, or the *holy people*. Then afterwards amongſt theſe he erects a government and poli-

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ty, and rules over them in the way and manner of a political prince, as hath been long ſince well obſerved by *Joſephus*, who therefore properly calls the *Jewiſh* government *a theocracy*, or *the government of God himſelf*.

And thus, in a ſcheme or figure, he ſhadows forth that ſpiritual kingdom and government which he would eſtabliſh amongſt that divine ſociety of men, in reference to which, we have ſo much mention made of the kingdom of heaven in the goſpel, which is not generally and ſolely meant of the ſtate of glory, much leſs of any outward church-rites, but mainly of that idea and exemplar of which the *Jewiſh* theocracy was an imitation. *Laſtly*, as a political prince, God draws forth a body of laws, as the political conſtitutions and rules of this government which he had ſet up, chuſing Mount *Sinai* for the theatre whereon he would promulge thoſe laws by which all his ſubjects ſhould be governed. And ſo I doubt not but that preface, by which the law is uſhered in, Exod. xx. 2. which ſpeaks of God's mercy in delivering them from the *Egyptian* thraldom, may very well be myſtically expounded. And all this was to ſignify that law which was to go forth from Mount *Sion*, the promulgation whereof was to be in a vital and ſpiritual way among the ſubjects of this ſpiritual kingdom. To all which we may add thoſe temporal inheritances which he diſtributed to the *Jewiſh* families, in imitation of that eternal bleſſedneſs and thoſe immortal inheritances which he ſhares out amongſt his ſpiritual ſons and ſubjects in heaven. And this I the rather add, becauſe here the *Jews* are much perplexed about untying this knot, namely, what the reaſon ſhould be that their law ſpeaks ſo ſparingly of any eternal reward, but runs out generally in promiſes of mundane and earthly bleſſings in the land of *Canaan*. But by this we may ſee the true reaſon of that which the Apoſtle ſpeaks concerning them, 2 Cor. iii. 14. *Untill this day the ſame vail in the reading of the Old Teſtament remaineth untaken away*. That vail which was on the face of *Moſes* was an emblem of all this great myſtery: and this vail was upon the face of the

the *Jews* in their reading the Old Teſtament; they dwelling ſo much in a carnal converſe with theſe ſacramental ſymbols which were offered to them in the reading of the law, that they could not ſee thro' them into the thing ſignified thereby; and ſo embraced ſhadows inſtead of ſubſtance, and made account to build up happineſs and heaven upon that earthly law to which properly the land of *Canaan* was annexed: whereas indeed this law ſhould have been their *ſchool maſter to have led them to Chriſt*, Gal. iii. 24. whoſe law it prefigured; which, that it might do the more effectually, God had annexed to the breach of any part of it ſuch ſevere curſes, that they might from thence perceive how much need they had of ſome further diſpenſation. And therefore this ſtate of theirs it ſet forth by a ſtate of bondage. For all external precepts carry perpetually an aſpect of auſterity and rigour to thoſe minds that are not informed by the internal ſweetneſs of them. And this it is only which makes the goſpel, or new law, to be a free, noble, and generous thing, becauſe it is ſeated in the ſouls of men: and therefore *Aquinas*, out of *Auguſtin*, hath well obſerved another difference between the law and goſpel; *The difference between the law and the goſpel is this, the former was founded on fear, the latter on love* *. This I the rather obſerve, becauſe the true meaning of that ſpirit of bondage which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of is frequently miſtaken. We might further, (if need were) for a confirmation of this which we have ſpoken concerning the typicalneſs of the whole *Jewiſh* œconomy, appeal to the third and fourth chapters of the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, which cannot well be underſtood without this notion, where we have the *Jewiſh* church, as a type of the true evangelical church, brought in as a child in its minority in ſervitude, under tutors and governors, ſhut up under the law till the time when that emphatical revelation of the great myſtery of God ſhould come, till the day ſhould break, and all the ſhadows of the night fly away.

That

* *Brevis differentia inter legem et evangelium eſt timor et amor.*

That I may return from this digreſſion to the argument we before purſued, this briefly may be added, That, under the old covenant, and in the time of the law, there were amongſt the *Jews* ſome that were evangelized, that were indeed *Chriſtians*, altho' not in name; as under the goſpel there are many that do judaize, are of as legal and ſervile ſpirits as the *Jews*, children of the bond-woman, reſting in mere external obſervances of religion, in an outward ſeeming purity, in a form of godlineſs, as did the Scribes and Phariſees of old.

From what hath hitherto been diſcourſed, I hope the difference between both covenants clearly appears, and that the goſpel was not brought in only to hold forth a new platform and model of religion; it was not brought in only to refine ſome notions of truth, that might formerly ſeem diſcoloured and diſfigured by a multitude of legal rites and ceremonies; it was not to caſt our opinions concerning the way of life and happineſs, only into a new mould and ſhape in a pedagogical kind of way: it is not ſo much a ſyſtem and body of ſaving divinity, but the ſpirit and vital influx of it ſpreading itſelf over all the powers of men's ſouls, and quickening them into a divine life: it is not ſo properly a doctrine that is wrapt up in ink and paper, as it is a vital ſcience, a living impreſſion made upon the ſoul and ſpirit. We may in a true ſenſe be as legal as ever the *Jews* were, if we converſe with the goſpel as a thing only without us; and be as far ſhort of the righteouſneſs of God as they were, if we make the righteouſneſs which is of Chriſt by faith to ſerve us only as an outward covering, and endeavour not after an internal transformation of our minds and ſouls into it. The goſpel does not ſo much conſiſt in words as in energy: neither doth evangelical diſpenſation therefore pleaſe God ſo much more than the legal did; becauſe, as a finer contrivance of his infinite underſtanding, it more clearly diſcovers the way of ſalvation to the minds of men; but chiefly becauſe it is a more powerful efflux of his divine goodneſs upon them, as being the true ſeed of a happy immortality continually thriving and growing on to perfection. I ſhall add further, The goſpel

gospel does not therefore hold forth such a transcendent privilege and advantage above what the law did, only because it acquaints us that Christ our true high priest is ascended up into the holy of holies, and there, instead of the blood of bulls and goats, hath sprinkled the ark and mercy seat above with his own blood: but also because it conveys that blood of sprinkling into our defiled consciences, to purge them from dead works. Far be it from me to disparage in the least the merit of Christ's blood, his becoming obedient unto death, whereby we are justified. But I doubt sometimes some of our tenets and notions about justification may swell us with far higher and goodlier conceits of ourselves than God hath of us; and that we profanely make the unspotted righteousness of Christ to serve only as a covering wherein to wrap up our foul deformities and filthy vices; and when we have done, think ourselves in as good credit and repute with God as we are with ourselves, and that we are become heaven's darlings as much as we are our own. I doubt not but that the merit and obedience of our Saviour gain us favour with God, and potently move down the benign influences of heaven upon us: but yet I think we may sometimes be too lavish and wanton in our imaginations, in fondly conceiting a greater change in the esteem which God hath of us than becomes us, and too little reckon upon the real and vital emanations of his favour upon us.

Therefore, for the further clearing of what hath been already said, and laying a ground upon which the next part of our discourse (*viz.* concerning the conveyance of this god-like righteousness to us by faith) is to proceed, we shall here speak something more to the business of justification and divine acceptance, which we shall dispatch in two particulars.

## CHAP. V.

OUR firſt propoſition is this, *The divine judgment and eſtimation of every thing is according to the truth of the thing; and Gods acceptance or diſacceptance of things is ſuitable and proportionable to his judgment.* Thus St. *Peter* plainly tells us, *God is no reſpecter of perſons; but every one that worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him,* Acts x. 34. 35. And to the ſame purpoſe was that queſtion which God himſelf put to *Cain* (who had entertained thoſe unworthy and ungrounded ſuſpicions of his partiality) *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* Gen. iv. 7. Whereſoever God finds any impreſſions of goodneſs, he likes and approves them, knowing them well to be what they indeed are, nothing elſe but his own image and ſuperſcription. Wherever he ſees his own image ſhining in the ſouls of men, and a conformity of life to that eternal idea of Goodneſs which is himſelf, he loves it and takes a complacency in it, as that which is from himſelf, and is a true imitation of himſelf. And as his own unbounded being and goodneſs is the primary and original object of his immenſe and almighty love: ſo alſo every thing that partakes of him, partakes proportionably of his love; all imitations of him and participations of his love and goodneſs are perpetually adequate and commenſurate the one to the other. By ſo much the more acceptable any one is to God, by how much the more he comes to reſemble God. It was a common notion in the old *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* theology, that the divinity transformed into love, and enamoured with its own unlimited perfections and ſpotleſs beauty, delighted to copy forth and ſhadow out itſelf as it were in created beings, which are perpetually embraced by that ſame love, from which they can never ſwerve nor apoſtatize, till they alſo prove apoſtate to the eſtate of their creation. And certainly it is true in our chriſtian divinity, that that divine light and goodneſs which

which flows forth from God, the original of all, upon the ſouls of men, never goes ſolitary and deſtitute of love, complacency and acceptation, which is always lodged together with it in the divine eſſence. And as the divine complacency thus dearly and tenderly entertains all thoſe who bear a ſimilitude of true goodneſs upon them; ſo it always abandons from its embraces all evil, which never doth nor can mix itſelf with it: the holy Spirit can never ſuffer any unhallowed or defiled thing to enter into it or to unite itſelf with it. Therefore in a ſober ſenſe I hope I may truly ſay, there is no perfect reconciliation wrought between God and the ſouls of men, while any defiled and impure thing dwells within the ſoul, which cannot truly cloſe with God, nor God with that. The divine love according to thoſe degrees by which it works upon the ſouls of men in transforming them into its own likeneſs, by the ſame it renders them more acceptable to itſelf, mingleth itſelf with and uniteth itſelf to them: as the ſpirit of any thing mixeth itſelf more or leſs with any matter it acts upon, according as it works itſelf into it, and ſo makes a way and paſſage open for itſelf.

Upon this account I ſuppoſe it may be that St. *James* attributes a kind of juſtification to good works, which unqueſtionably are things that God approves and accepts, and all thoſe in whom he finds them, as ſeeing there a true conformity to his own goodneſs and holineſs. Whereas, on the other ſide, he diſparageth that barren, ſluggiſh and drowſy belief, which a lazy lethargy in religion began in his times ſo much to cheriſh, in reference to acceptation with God. I ſuppoſe I may fairly thus explain his whole diſcourſe upon this argument: God reſpects not a bold, confident and audacious faith, that is big with nothing but its own preſumptions. It is not becauſe our heads are filled with a ſtrong conceit of God's eternal love to us, or becauſe we ſwell into a mighty bulk with airy fancies and preſumptions of our acceptance with God, that makes us the more acceptable to him: It is not a pertinacious imagination of our names being enrolled in the book of life, or of

Chriſt being ours, while we find him not living within us, or of the waſhing away of our ſins in his blood, while the foul and filthy ſtains thereof are deeply ſunk in our own ſouls; it is not, I ſay, a pertinacious imagination of any of theſe that can make us better men: and a mere conceit or opinion, as it makes us never the better in reality within ourſelves, ſo it cannot render us the more acceptable to God who judges of all things as they are. No, it muſt be a true compliance with the divine will, which muſt render us ſuch as the divinity may take pleaſure in. *In Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing* (nor any fancy built upon any other external privilege) *but the keeping of the commandments of God*, 1 Cor. vii. 19. No, but *if any man does the will of God, him will both the Father and the Son love; they will come into him, and make their abode with him*, John xiv. 23. This is the ſcope and mark at which a true heaven-born faith aims; and when it hath attained this end, then is it indeed perfect and compleat in its laſt accompliſhment. And by how much the more ardency and intention faith levels at this mark of inward goodneſs and divine activity, by ſo much the more perfect and ſincere it is. This is that which God juſtifies, it being juſt and correſpondent to his own good pleaſure: and in whomſoever he finds this, both it and they are accepted of him. And ſo I come to the ſecond particular.

2. *God's juſtifying of ſinners in pardoning and remitting their ſins carries in it a neceſſary reference to the ſanctifying of their natures*; without which juſtification would rather be a glorious name than a real privilege to the ſouls of men. While men continue in their wickedneſs, they do but vainly dream of a device to reſtrain the hands of an Almighty vengeance from ſeizing on them: no, their own ſins, like ſo many armed giants, would firſt or laſt ſet upon them, and rend them with inward torment. There needs no angry cherub with a flaming ſword drawn out every way to keep their unhallowed hands off from the tree of life: no, their own luſts, like ſo many arrows in their ſides, would chaſe them,

them, their own helliſh natures would ſink them low enough into eternal death, and faſt chain them up in fetters of darkneſs among the accurſed fiends of hell. Sin will always be miſerable; and the ſinner at laſt, when the empty bladders of all thoſe hopes and expectations of an airy mundane happineſs, that did here bear him up in this life, ſhall be cut, will find it like a talent of lead weighing him down into the bottomleſs gulf of miſery. If all were clear towards heaven, we ſhould find ſin raiſing up ſtorms in our own ſouls. We cannot carry fire in our own boſoms, and yet not be burnt. Though we could ſuppoſe the greateſt ſerenity without us, if we could ſuppoſe ourſelves near ſo much to be at truce with heaven, and all divine diſpleaſure laid aſleep; yet would our own ſins, if they continue unmortified, firſt or laſt make an *Ætna* or *Veſuvius* within us. Nay thoſe ſun-beams of eternal truth, which by us are detained in unrighteouſneſs, would at laſt in thoſe helliſh vaults of vice and darkneſs that are within us kindle into an unquenchable fire. It would be of ſmall benefit to us, that Chriſt hath triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkneſs without us, if hell and death, ſtrongly immured in a ſort of our own ſins and corruptions, ſhould tyrannize within us: that his blood ſhould ſpeak peace in heaven, if in the mean while our own luſts were perpetually warring againſt our own ſouls: that he hath taken off our guilt and cancelled that hand-writing that was againſt us, which bound us over to eternal condemnation; if for all this we continue faſt ſealed up in the helliſh dungeon of our own filthy luſts. Indeed we could not expect any relief from heaven out of that miſery under which we ly, were not God's diſpleaſure againſt us firſt pacified, and our ſins remitted: but ſhould the divine clemency ſtoop no lower to us than to a mere pardon of our ſins and an abſtract juſtification, we ſhould never riſe out of that miſery under which we ly. This is the ſignal and tranſcendent benefit of our free juſtification through the blood of Chriſt, that the anger of God juſtly conceived againſt us for our ſins (which would have been an eternal bar

and reſtraint to the efflux of his grace upon us) being removed, the divine grace and bounty may freely flow forth upon us. The fountain of the divine grace and love which our ſins had ſhut up, is now unlocked and opened, and now the ſtreams of holineſs and true goodneſs from thence freely flow forth into all panting ſouls that thirſt after them. The warm ſun of the divine love, whenever it breaks through and ſcatters the thick cloud of our iniquities which had formerly ſeparated between God and us, it immediately breaks forth upon us with healing in its wings; it exerciſeth the mighty force of its own light and heat upon our dark and benummed ſouls, begetting in them a lively ſenſe of God, and kindling into ſparks of divine goodneſs within us. This love, when once it hath chaſed away the thick miſt of our ſins, will be *as ſtrong as death upon us, as potent as the grave: many waters will not quench it, nor the floods drown it,* Cant. viii. 6. 7. If we ſhut not the windows of our ſouls againſt it, it will at laſt enlighten all thoſe regions of darkneſs that are within us, and lead our ſouls to the light of life, bleſſedneſs and immortality. God pardons men's ſins out of an eternal deſign of deſtroying the power of ſin. Whenever the ſentence of death is taken off from a ſinner, it is at the ſame time denounced againſt his ſins. God does not bid us be warmed and be filled, and deny us thoſe neceſſaries for which our ſtarving and hungry ſouls call. Chriſt having made peace through the blood of his croſs, the heavens ſhall be no more as iron above us: but we ſhall receive freely the vital dew of them, the former and the latter rain in their ſeaſon, thoſe influences from above, after which ſouls truly ſenſible of their own miſery and imperfection inceſſantly pant, that righteouſneſs of God which drops from above, from the unſealed ſpring of free goodneſs which makes glad the city of God. This is that free love and grace in which the ſouls of good men ſo much triumph; this is that juſtification which begets in them lively hopes of an happy immortality in the preſent

preſent anticipations thereof which ſpring forth from it in this life. And all this is that which we have called ſometimes *The righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, ſometimes *the righteouſneſs of God*; and here, *the righteouſneſs which is of faith*. In heaven it is a not-imputing of ſin; in the ſouls of men it is a reconciliation of rebellious natures to truth and goodneſs. In heaven it is the lifting up the light of God's countenance upon us, which begets a gladſome entertainment in the ſouls of men, holy and dear reflections and reciprocations of love: divine love to us, as it were by a natural emanation, begetting a reflex love in us towards God, as they live and thrive together.

## CHAP. VI.

WE come now to the laſt part of our diſcourſe, *viz. To ſhew the way by which this god-like and goſpel-righteouſneſs is conveyed to us*; and that is *by faith*. This is that powerful attractive which by a ſtrong and divine ſympathy draws down the virtue of heaven into the ſouls of men, which ſtrongly and forcibly moves the ſouls of good men into a conjunction with that divine goodneſs by which it lives and grows: this is that divine impreſs that invincibly draws them in by degrees into the divinity, and ſo unites them more and more to the centre of life and love: it is ſomething in the hearts of men which, feeling by an occult and inward ſenſation the mighty inſinuations of the divine goodneſs, immediately complies with it, and with the greateſt ardency that may be is perpetually riſing up into conjunction with it; and being firſt begotten and enlivened by the warm beams of that goodneſs, it always breathes and pants after it for its conſtant growth and nouriſhment. It is then fulleſt of life and vivacity, when it partakes moſt

moſt freely of it; and perpetually languiſheth when it is in any meaſure deprived of that ſweet and pure nouriſhment it derives from it.

But that we may the more clearly unfold this matter, *How goſpel-righteouſneſs comes to be communicated through faith*, we ſhall lay it forth in two particulars.

First, *The goſpel lays a ſtrong foundation of a chearful dependance upon the grace and love of God, and aſſurance in it.* We have the greateſt ſecurity and aſſurance that may be given us of God's readineſs to relieve ſuch forlorn and deſolate creatures as we are: that there are no ſuch dreadful fates in heaven as are continually thirſting after the blood of ſinners, inſatiably greedy after their prey, never ſatisfied till they have devoured the ſouls of men. Leſt we ſhould by ſuch dreadful apprehenſions be driven from God, we are told of the *blood of ſprinkling that ſpeaks better things* for us; of a mighty favourite ſoliciting our cauſe with perpetual interceſſions in the court of heaven; of a new and living way to the throne of grace and to the Holy of holies which our Saviour hath conſecrated through his fleſh: we are told of a great and mighty Saviour *able to ſave to the utmoſt* all that come to God by him: we hear of the moſt compaſſionate and tender promiſes that may be from the truth itſelf, that, *Whoſoever comes to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out*; that *They that believe on him, out of them ſhould flow ſtreams of living water*: we hear of the moſt gracious invitations that heaven can make to all weary and heavy-laden ſinners to come to Chriſt, that they may find reſt: the great ſecrets of heaven and of the divine counſels are revealed, whereby we are acquainted that *Glory to God in the higheſt, peace on earth, good will towards men*, are ſweetly joined together in heaven's harmony, and happily combined together in the compoſure of its ſong of thankſgiving: that the glory of the Deity and ſalvation of men are not allayed by their union one with another, but both exalted together in the moſt tranſcendent way, that divine love and bounty are the ſupreme rulers in heaven and earth, there is no

no ſuch thing as ſoure deſpight and envy lodged in the boſom of that ever-bleſſed being above*, whoſe name is LOVE, and all whoſe diſpenſations to the ſons of men are but the diſpreadings and diſtended radiations of his love, as freely flowing forth from it through the whole orb and ſphere of its creation as the bright light from the ſun in the firmament, of whoſe benign influences we are then only deprived when we hide and withdraw ourſelves from them. We are taught that the mild and gentle breathings of the divine Spirit are moving up and down in the world to produce life, and to revive and quicken the ſouls of men into a feeling ſenſe of a bleſſed immortality. This is that mighty Spirit that will, if we comply with it, *Teach us all things*, John xiv. 26. even the hidden things of God; mortify all the luſts of rebellious fleſh, and *ſeal us up to the day of redemption*, Epheſ iv. 30. We are taught that with all holy boldneſs we may *In all places lift up holy hands to God, without wrath or doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8 without any unworthy thoughts of God, or fretful jealouſies, or harſh ſurmiſes. We can never diſtruſt enough in ourſelves, nor ever truſt too much in God. This is that full confidence which the goſpel every where ſeems to promote: and ſhould I run through all the arguments and ſollicitations that are there laid down, to provoke us to an entertainment hereof, I ſhould then run quite through it from one end to another: it containing almoſt nothing elſe in the whole complex and body of it but ſtrong and forcible motives to all ingenuous addreſſes to God, and the moſt effectual encouragement that may be to all chearful dependence on him, and confident expectation of all aſſiſtance from him to carry on our poor endeavours to the atchievement of bleſſedneſs, and that in the moſt plain and ſimple way, without any double mind or mental reſervation. But it is very ſtrange that where God writes life ſo plainly in fair capital letters, we are ſo often apt to read death; that when he repeatedly tells us, that hell and deſtruction ariſe from ourſelves, that they are the workmanſhip of our own hands, we will needs underſtand their pedigree to be from heaven, and

* ἀ φθόνος ἐξωΐσταται τοῦ χόρου.

and that they were conceived in the womb of life and bleſſedneſs. No, but the goſpel tells us, *We are not come unto the mount that burned with fire; nor unto blackneſs and darkneſs and tempeſt*, Heb. xii. 18. Certainly a lively faith in this love of God, and a ſober converſe with his goodneſs by a cordial entertainment and thorough perſuaſion of it, would warm our benummed minds and thaw our hearts frozen with ſelf-love; it would make us melt and diſſolve out of all ſelf-conſiſtency, and, by a free and noble ſympathy with the divine love, to yield up ourſelves to it, and dilate and ſpread ourſelves more fully in it. This would baniſh away all atheiſm and ireful ſlaviſh ſuperſtition; it would caſt down every high thought and proud imagination that ſwells within us and exalts itſelf againſt this ſovereign Deity; it would free us from all thoſe poor, mean and particular loves that here inthral the ſouls of men to vanity and baſeneſs; it would lead us into the true liberty of the ſons of God, filling our hearts once enlarged with the ſenſe of it with a more generous and univerſal love, as unlimited and unbounded as is true goodneſs itſelf. Thus *Moſes*-like, converſing with God in the mount, and there beholding his glory ſhining thus out upon us in the face of Chriſt, we ſhould be deriving a copy of that eternal beauty upon our own ſouls, and our thirſty ſpirits would be perpetually ſeeking after a true participation of his glory. A true divine love would wing our ſouls, and make them take their flight ſwiftly towards heaven and immortality. Could we once be thoroughly poſſeſſed and maſtered with a full confidence of the divine love, and God's readineſs to aſſiſt ſuch feeble, languiſhing creatures as we are, in our eſſays after heaven and bleſſedneſs, we ſhould then, finding ourſelves born up by an eternal and almighty ſtrength, dare to adventure courageouſly and confidently upon the higheſt deſigns of happineſs, to aſſail the kingdom of heaven with a holy violence, to purſue a courſe of well-doing without wearineſs; knowing that our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, and that we ſhall receive our reward, if we faint not: we ſhould work out our ſalvation in the moſt induſtrious manner, truſting

truſting in God as one ready to inſtil ſtrength and power into all the vital faculties of our ſouls: we ſhould *preſs towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iii. 14. *that we may apprehend that for which alſo we are apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iii. 12. If we ſuffer not ourſelves to be robbed of this confidence and hope in God as ready to accompliſh the deſires of thoſe that ſeek after him, we may then walk on ſtrongly in the way to heaven and not be weary, we may run and not faint. And the more the ſouls of men grow in this bliſsful perſuaſion, the more they ſhall mount up like eagles into a clear heaven, finding themſelves riſing higher and higher above all thoſe impure miſts, thoſe clouds and tempeſts of a ſlaviſh fear, deſpair, fretfulneſs againſt God, pale jealouſies, wrathful and imbittered thoughts of him, or any ſtrugglings or conteſts to get from within the verge of his power and omniſciency.

I mean not all this while by this holy boldneſs and confidence and preſence of mind in a believer's converſe with the Deity, that high pitch of aſſurance which wafts the ſouls of good men over the lake of death, and brings them to the borders of life; which here puts them into an actual poſſeſſion of bliſs, and re-eſtates and re-eſtabliſhes them in paradiſe: no, that more general acquaintance which we may have with God's *philanthropy* and bounty, ready to relieve with the bowels of his tender compaſſions all thoſe ſtarving ſouls who call upon him, (for ſurely he will never do leſs for fainting and drooping ſouls than he doth for the young ravens that cry out unto him;) that converſe which we are incited by the goſpel to maintain with God's unconfined love, if we underſtand it aright, will awaken us out of our drowſy lethargy and make us *Aſk of him the way to Sion with our faces thitherward*, Jer. l. 5: This will be digging up freſh fountains for us while we go through the valley of *Baca*, whereby refreſhing our weary ſouls we ſhall *Go on from ſtrength to ſtrength until we ſee the face of our* loving, and ever to be loved, *God in Sion*, Pſalm. lxxxiv. 7. And ſo I come

come to the next particular wherein we ſhall further unfold how this God-like righteouſneſs of which we have ſpoken, is conveyed to us by faith:

2. *A true goſpel-faith is no lazy or languid thing, but a ſtrong and ardent breathing for and thirſting after divine grace and righteouſneſs:* it doth not only purſue an ambitious project of raiſing the ſoul immaturely to the condition of a darling favourite with heaven, while it is unripe for it, by procuring a mere empty pardon of ſin; but it earneſtly purſues after an internal participation of the divine nature. We often hear of a ſaving faith; and that, where it is, is not content to wait for ſalvation till the world to come; it is not patient of being an expectant in a probationerſhip for it, until this earthly body reſigns up all it's worldly intereſt, that ſo the ſoul might then come into its room: no, but it is here perpetually panting after it, and effecting it in a way of ſerious mortification and ſelf-denial: it inlarges and dilates itſelf as much as may be according to the vaſt dimenſions of the divine love, that it may comprehend the height and depth, the length and breadth thereof, and fill the ſoul, where it is ſeated, with all the fullneſs of God: it breeds a ſtrong and unſatiable appetite where it comes after true goodneſs. Were I to deſcribe it, I ſhould do it no otherwiſe than in the language of the Apoſtle: It is that whereby *we live in Chriſt, and* whereby *he lives in us*, Gal. ii. 20; or, in the dialect of our Saviour himſelf, ſomething ſo powerfully ſucking in the precious influences of the divine Spirit, that the ſoul where it is, is continually flowing with living waters iſſuing out of itſelf, John vii. 38. A truly-believing ſoul, by an ingenuous affiance in God, and an eager thirſt after him, ever ſeeks for nouriſhment from the divine love; thence it will not part; for there, and there only, is its life: it ſtarves and faints away with grief and hunger, whenſoever it is pulled away from thence; it is perpetually hanging upon the arms of immortal goodneſs, for there it finds its great ſtrength lies; and, as much as may, arrays itſelf with the mighty power of God, by which it goes forth like a giant refreſhed with wine to run

run that race of grace and holineſs that leads to the true *Elyſium* of glory, and that heavenly *Canaan* which is above. And whenſoever it finds itſelf enfeebled in its difficult conflict with thoſe fierce and furious corruptions, thoſe tall ſons of *Anak*, which ariſing from our terrene and ſenſual affections do here encounter it in the wilderneſs of this world; then turning itſelf to God, and putting itſelf under the conduct of the Angel of his preſence, it finds itſelf preſently out of weakneſs to become ſtrong, enabled from above to put to flight thoſe mighty armies of the aliens. True faith, (if you would know its riſe and pedigree) is begotten of the divine bounty and fulneſs manifeſting itſelf to the ſpirits of men, and is brought forth by a deep and humble ſenſe of ſelf-indigency and poverty. Faith ariſes out of ſelf exinanition ſeating and placing itſelf in view of the divine plenitude and all-ſufficiency; and thus (that I may borrow thoſe words of St. *Paul*) *We received the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in him*, 2 Cor. i. 9. The more this ſenſual, brutiſh and ſelf-central life thrives and proſpers, the more divine faith languiſheth; and the more that decays, and all ſelf-feeling, ſelf-love, and ſelf-ſufficiency pine away, the more is true faith fed and nouriſhed, it grows more vigorous: and as carnal life waſtes and conſumes, ſo the more does faith acquire a true divine and ſpiritual life from him who hath life in himſelf, and freely beſtows it to all thoſe who heartily ſeek for it. When the divinity united itſelf to human nature in the perſon of our Saviour, he then gave mankind a pledge and earneſt of what he would further do therein, in aſſuming of it into as near a conjunction as might be with himſelf, and in diſpenſing and communicating himſelf to man in a way as far correſpondent and agreeable as might be to that firſt copy. And therefore we are told of *Chriſt being formed in us*, and *the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in us; of our being made conformable to him, of having fellowſhip with him, of being as he was in this world, of living in him and his living in us, of dying, and riſing again, and aſcending with*

*him into heaven*, and the like: becauſe, indeed, the ſame Spirit that dwelt in him, extends itſelf in its mighty virtue and energy through all believing ſouls, ſhaping them more and more into a juſt reſemblance and conformity to him as the firſt copy and pattern: whence it is, that we have ſo many ways of unfolding the union between Chriſt and all believers ſet forth in the the goſpel. And all this is done for us by degrees, through the efficacy of the eternal Spirit, when, by a true faith we deny ourſelves and our own wills; ſubmit ourſelves in a deep ſenſe of our own folly and weakneſs to his wiſdom and power, comply with his will, and, by a holy affiance in him, ſubordinate ourſelves to his pleaſure: for theſe are the vital acts of a goſpel-faith.

And according to this which hath been ſaid, I ſuppoſe we may fairly comment upon St. *Paul*'s diſcourſes which ſo much prefer *faith* above *works*. We muſt not think in a giant-like pride, to ſcale the walls of heaven by our own works, and by force thereof to take the ſtrong fort of bleſſedneſs, and wreſt the crown of glory out of God's hands; we muſt not think to commence a ſuit in heaven for happineſs upon ſuch a poor and weak plea as our own external compliance with the old law, is; we muſt not think to deal with God in the method of commutative juſtice, and to challenge eternal life as the juſt reward of our great merits, and the hire due to us for our labour and toil we have taken in God's vineyard. No, *God reſiſts the proud, but gives grace to the humble*, Jam. iv. 6: it muſt be an humble and ſelf-denying addreſs of a ſoul diſſolved into a deep and piercing ſenſe of its own nothingneſs and unprofitableneſs, that can be capable of the divine bounty: *he fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he ſends empty away*, Luke. i. 53. They are the hungry and thirſty ſouls, always panting after the living ſprings of divine grace, as the parched ground in the deſart doth for the dew of heaven, ready to drink them in by a conſtant dependance upon God; ſouls, that by a living, watchful and diligent faith, ſpreading forth themſelves in all obſequious reverence and love of

of him, wait upon him *as the eyes of an handmaid wait on the hand of her miſtreſs:* Theſe are they whom he delights to ſatiate with his goodneſs. Theſe are they who being fully perſuaded of their own indigency, their pinching and preſſing poverty, and his all-ſufficient fulneſs, truſt in him as an almighty Saviour and in the moſt ardent manner purſue after that perfection which his grace is leading them to; who cannot ſatisfy themſelves in a bare performance of ſome external acts of righteouſneſs, or an external obſervance of a law without them, but with the moſt fervent ambition purſue after ſuch an acquaintance with his divine Spirit as may breath an inward life through all the powers of their ſouls, and beget in them a vital form and ſoul of divine goodneſs. Theſe are the ſpiritual ſeed of faithful *Abraham*, the ſons of the free-woman, and heirs of the promiſes, to whom all are made *Yea and amen in Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Corinth. i. 20. Theſe are they which ſhall abide in the houſe for ever, when the ſons of the bond-woman, they who are only *Arabian* proſelytes, ſhall be caſt out.

## CHAP. VII.

FOR the further illuſtration of ſome things, eſpecially in the latter part of this diſcourſe, it may not be amiſs, in ſome particulars (which might eaſily be enlarged) to ſhew, *How the undertaking of Chriſt* (that great object of faith) *is greatly advantageous and available to the giving full relief and eaſe to our minds and hearts, and alſo to the encouraging us to godlineſs, or a true God-like righteouſneſs.*

In the general, therefore, we may conſider, That full and evident aſſurance is given hereby to the world, That God doth indeed *ſeek the ſaving of that which is loſt*; and men are no longer to make any doubt or ſcruple of it. Now what can we imagine more available to carry on a deſign of godlineſs, and to rouze

languid ſouls to an effectual minding of their own ſalvation, than to have this news ſounding in their ears by men who (at the firſt promulgation thereof) durſt plainly tell them in the name of God, that God required them every where to repent, for that his kingdom of grace was now apparent; and that he was not only willing, but it was his gracious deſign to ſave and recover loſt ſinners who had forſaken his goodneſs:

Particularly, that the whole buſineſs of Chriſt is very advantageous for this purpoſe, and highly accommodate thereto, may appear thus:

1. We are fully aſſured that God hath this forementioned deſign upon loſt men, becauſe here is one (*viz.* Chriſt) who partakes every way of human nature, in whom the divinity magnifies itſelf, and carries through this world in human infirmities and ſufferings to eternal glory: a clear manifeſtation to the world that God had not caſt off human nature, but purpoſes to exalt and dignify it again.

2. The way into the holy of holies or to eternal happineſs is laid as open as may be by Chriſt, in his doctrine, life, and death: in all which we may ſee with open face what human nature may attain to, and how it may by humility, ſelf-denial and divine love, a Chriſt-like life, riſe above all viſible heavens into a ſtate of immortal glory and bliſs.

3. Here is a manifeſtation of love given, enough to thaw all the icyneſs of men's hearts which ſelf-love had quite frozen up: For here is one who in human nature moſt heartily every where denying himſelf, is ready to do any thing for the good of mankind, and at laſt gives up his life for the ſame purpoſe; and that according to the good will and pleaſure of that eternal love which *ſo loved the world, that he gave* this beloved and *his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16.

4. Whereas every penitent ſinner carries a ſenſe of guilt upon his own conſcience, is apt to ſhrink with cold chill fears of offended majeſty; and to dread the thoughts

thoughts of violated juſtice: he is aſſured, that Chriſt hath laid down his life, and thereby made propitiation and atonement for ſin; that he hath laid down his life for the redemption of him; and ſo in *Chriſt we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins*, Eph. i 7. Thus may the hearts of all penitents, troubled at firſt with a ſenſe of their own guilt, be quieted, and fully eſtabliſhed in a living faith and hope in an eternal goodneſs; ſeeing that their ſins are remitted through the blood of Jeſus who came to die for them and ſave them, and through his blood they may have free acceſs unto God.

5. Seeing ſin and guilt are apt continually to beget a jealouſy of God's majeſty and greatneſs, from whom the ſinner finds himſelf at a vaſt diſtance, he is made acquainted with a Mediator, through whom he may addreſs himſelf to God, without this jealouſy or doubting; for that this Mediator likewiſe is one of human nature, who is highly beloved and accepted of God, he having ſo highly pleaſed God by performing his will in all things. Certainly it is very much for the eaſe of a penitent's mind, (as it makes alſo for the diſparagement of ſin) that our addreſſes to God ſhould be through a Mediator. The *Platoniſts* wiſely obſerved, that between the pure divinity and impure ſinners as there is no union, ſo no communion: it is very agreeable every way and upon all accounts, that they who in themſelves are altogether unworthy and under demerit, ſhould come to God by a Mediator.

Thus the ſcripture every where ſeems to repreſent and hold forth Chriſt in the forenamed particulars, (without deſcending into the niceties and ſubtilties with which the ſchool-men and others from them have troubled the world,) in a very full and ample manner, that ſo the minds of true believers, who are willing to comply with the purpoſe of God for their own eternal peace, might in all caſes find ſomething in Chriſt for their relief, and make uſe of him as much as may be to encourage and promote godlineſs: for by this whole undertaking of Chriſt manifeſted in the goſpel, God

would have to be underſtood full relief of mind and eaſe of conſcience, as alſo all encouragement to godlineſs, and diſparagement of ſin. And indeed the whole doctrine of the ſufferings and atonement of Chriſt is the greateſt blow to ſin that may be; for the world is taught hereby, that there is no ſinning upon cheap and eaſy terms: men may ſee that God will not return ſo eaſily into favour with ſinners; but he will have his righteouſneſs acknowledged, and likewiſe their own demerit. And this acknowledgment he is once indeed pleaſed to accept of in the perſon of our Saviour: yet if men will not now turn to him, and accept his favour, they muſt know that there is no other ſacrifice for ſin.

By theſe particulars, upon which we have briefly touched, (to name no more) it may appear, that when we look into the goſpel, we are taught to believe that Chriſt hath done, according to the good pleaſure of God, every thing for us, that may truly relieve our minds, and encourage us to godlineſs, a god-like righteouſneſs far exceeding the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees.

THE

# THE

# SHORTNESS and VANITY

# OF A

# Pharisaical Righteousness.

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# SHORTNESS AND VANITY

# OF A

# Phariſaical Righteouſneſs

Diſcovered in a Diſcourſe upon

MATTHEW xix. 20, 21.

*The young Man ſaith unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*

*Jeſus ſaith unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give it to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in Heaven: and come and follow me.*

## CHAP. I.

AS there is no kind of excellency more generally pretended to than religion, ſo there is none leſs known, or wherein men are more apt to delude themſelves. Every one is ready to lay claim, and to plead a right in it *; but few there are who underſtand the true worth and preciouſneſs of it. There are ſome common notions and a natural inſtinct of devotion ſeated

* Like the Bat in the *Jewiſh* fable, that pretended the light was her's, and complained of the unjuſt detainment thereof from her.

ſeated in the minds of men, which are ever and anon roving after religion; and as they caſually and fortuitouſly ſtart up any models and ideas of it, they are preſently prone to believe themſelves to have found out this only pearl of price: the religion of moſt men being indeed no more than ſuch a ſtrain and ſcheme of thoughts and actions, as their natural propenſions, ſwayed by nothing elſe but an inbred belief of a Deity, accidentally run into; nothing elſe but an image and reſemblance of their own fancies which are ever buſy in painting out themſelves; which is the reaſon, why there are as many ſhapes and features of religion painted forth in the minds of men, as there are various ſhapes of faces and fancies. Thus men are wont to faſhion and delineate their religion to themſelves in a ſtrange and uncouth manner, as the imaginations of men in their dreams are wont to repreſent monſtrous and hideous ſhapes of things, that no where elſe appear. And tho' ſome may ſeem to themſelves to have aſcended up above this low region, this vulgar ſtate of religion; yet I doubt they may ſtill be wrapped up in clouds and darkneſs, they may ſtill be but in a middle region, like wandring meteors, that have not yet ſhaken off that groſs and earthly nature which will at laſt force them again downwards. There may be ſome who may arrive at that book ſkill and learning in divine myſteries, that, with a phariſaical pride, looking down upon the rude and vulgar ſort of men, may ſay, *This people who knoweth not the law, are curſed*; John vii. 49. who themſelves yet converſe only with an airy ghoſt and ſhadow of religion: though the light of divine truth may ſeem to ſhine upon them, yet by reaſon of their dark hearts, it ſhines not into them: they may, like this dull earth, be ſuperficially gilded, and warmed too, with its beams, and yet the impreſſions thereof do not pierce quite through them. There may be many fair ſemblances of religion where the ſubſtance and power of it is not. We ſhall here endeavour to diſcover ſome of them which may ſeem moſt ſpecious, and with which the weak underſtandings of men

men (which are no where more lazy and ſluggiſh than in matters of religion) are moſt apt to be deluded; and then diſcover the reaſon of theſe miſtakes.

For which purpoſe we have made choice of theſe words, wherein we find a young Phariſee beginning to ſwell with a vain conceit of his good eſtate towards God, looking upon himſelf as being already upon the borders of perfection, having from his youth upwards kept on a conſtant courſe in the way of God's commandments; he could not now, be many miles from the land of *Canaan*, if he were not already paſſed over *Jordan*; he thought himſelf to be already in a ſtate of perfection, or at leaſt within ſight of it: and therefore making account that he was as lovely in our Saviour's eyes as he was in his own, aſks him, *What lack I yet?*

For the underſtanding of which, we muſt know the *Jews* were wont to diſtinguiſh righteous men into two ſorts *, and to which this query of his ſeems to refer, as if he had ſaid, Having kept all God's commandments, ſure my good deeds not only over-balance my evil, but fill both the ſcales of the divine balance; I have no evil deeds to weigh againſt them: what therefore can I want of the end and ſcope of the divine law, which is to make men perfect, ſeeing I have guided my whole life from my youth up by the precepts of it? to which our Saviour replies; *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come and follow me.* Which words I can neither think to be ſpoken as an advice neceſſary to be followed in order to attain perfection in the Papal ſenſe, nor yet only as a particular and ſpecial precept; but rather by way of conviction: ſo that the full ſenſe and importance of our Saviour's ſpeech ſeems to be this, *viz.* A mere conformity of the outward man to the law of God is not ſufficient to bring a man to eternal life; but the inward man alſo muſt deeply receive in the ſtamp and impreſſion of the divine law, ſo as to be made like to God. True perfection is not conſiſtent

* צדקים נמורים צדקים.

conſiſtent with any terrene loves or worldly affections: this mundane life and ſpirit which acts ſo ſtrongly and impetuouſly in this lower world, muſt be crucified: the ſoul muſt be wholly freed from this earthly body in which it is ſo deeply immerſt, while it endeavours to enlarge its ſorry tabernacle upon this material globe, and, by a holy abſtraction from all things that pinion it to mortality, to withdraw itſelf and retire into a divine ſolitude. If thou therefore wert in a ſtate of perfection, thou wouldſt be able, at the firſt call from God, to reſign up all intereſt here below, to quit all claim, and to diſpoſe of thyſelf and all worldly enjoyments according to his pleaſure, without any reluctancy; *and come and follow me.* And this, I think, was the true ſcope of our Saviour's anſwer; which proved a real demonſtration, as it appears in the ſequel of the ſtory, that this confident Phariſee had not yet attained to thoſe mortified affections; which are requiſite in all the candidates of true bleſſedneſs; but only cheated his own ſoul with a bare external appearance of religion, which was not truly ſeated in his heart: and I doubt not, but many are ready upon as ſlight grounds, and with as much confidence, to put this queſtion, *What lack I yet?*

We ſhall therefore, in the firſt place, according to what we promiſed, inquire into ſome of thoſe falſe pretences which men are apt to make to happineſs, and ſhew in four particulars how religion is miſtaken.

## CHAP. II.

THE firſt is, *A partial obedience to ſome particular precepts of God's law.* That arrogant Phariſee who could lift up a bold face to heaven, and thank God, that he was no extortioner, nor unjuſt, nor guilty of any Publican-ſins, found it eaſy to perſuade himſelf that God juſtified him as much as he did himſelf.

It

It was a vulgar rule given by the Jewiſh doctors, by which I fear too many live, That men ſhould ſingle out ſome one commandment out of God's law, and therein eſpecially exerciſe themſelves, that ſo they might make God their friend by that, leſt in others they ſhould too much diſpleaſe him. Thus men are content to pay God the tenth part, and the ſeventh part of their lives too, if need be, ſo that they may without fear of ſacrilege or purloining, as they ſuppoſe, from him, enjoy all the reſt to themſelves: but they are not willing to conſecrate their whole lives to him, they are afra'd leſt religion ſhould incroach too much upon them, and too buſily invade their own rights and liberties, as their ſelfiſh ſpirit calls them.

There are ſuch who perhaps believe themſelves willing that God ſhould have his due, providing that he alſo let them enjoy their own without any lett or moleſtation; but they are very jealous leſt he ſhould incroach too much upon them, and are careſull to maintain a *meum* and *tuum* with heaven itſelf, and to ſet bounds to God's prerogative over them, leſt it ſhould ſwell too much, and grow too mighty for them to maintain their own priviledges under it. They would fain underſtand themſelves to be free-born under the dominion of God himſelf, and therefore ought not to be compelled to yield obedience to any ſuch laws of his as their own private ſeditious luſts and paſſions will not ſuffer them to give their conſent unto.

There are ſuch who perſuade themſelves that they are well-affected to God and willing to obey his commandments, but yet think they muſt not be uncivil to the world; nor ſo baſe and cowardly as not to maintain their own credit and reputation, with a due revenge upon thoſe who ſeem to impair it; or ſo much forget themſelves, as not to comply with the guiſe and faſhion of this world ſo far as it may make for their own emolument or preferment. Such as theſe, who are no faſt friends to religion, can eaſily find ſome poſtern-door by which to ſlip out into this world: and while they either do ſome conſtant homage to heaven in the exerciſe and performance of certain duties of religion

or abſtain from ſuch vices as the common opinions of men brand with infamy, or can fancy themſelves to be marked out with ſome of thoſe characters which they have learned from books or pulpit diſcourſes to be the notes of God's children and juſtified perſons; they grow big with ſelf-conceit, and can eaſily find out ſome handſome piece of ſophiſtry and cunning topick whereby to delude themſelves, in indulging ſome beloved luſt or other: they can ſometimes beat down the price of other mens religion, to inhance the value of their own; or it may be by a burning and fiery zeal againſt the opinions and deportments of others who are not of their own ſect, they may loſe the ſenſe of all their own guiltineſs. The Diſciples themſelves had almoſt forgotten the mild and gentle ſpirit of religion, when, in an overhaſty heat they called for fire down from heaven upon thoſe whom they deemed their maſter's enemies.

Sometimes a partial ſpirit in religion, that ſpends itſelf ōnly in ſome particulars, miſtakes the fair complexions of good nature for the true face of virtue; and a good bodily temperament will ſerve it, as a flattering glaſs, to beſtow beauty upon a deformed and miſſhapen mind, that it may ſeem virtuous. But it is not a true ſpirit of religion, whatſoever thoſe wanton wits may call it, that is thus particular and confined. No; that is of a ſubtile and working nature, it will be ſearching through the whole man, and leave nothing uninformed by itſelf: as it is with the ſoul that pervades all the portions of matter and every member of the body. Sin and grace cannot lodge together, they cannot divide and ſhare out between them two ſeveral dominions in one ſoul.

What is commonly ſaid of truth in general, we may ſay more eſpecially of true goodneſs, it is great and will prevail; it will lodge in the ſouls of men, like that mighty, though gentle, heat which is entertained in the heart, that always diſpenſeth warm blood and ſpirits to all the members in the body: it will not ſuffer any other intereſt to grow by it: it will be ſo abſolute as to ſwallow up all our carnal freedom, and cruſh down

down all our fleſhly liberty: as the ſerpent of *Moſes* did eat up all the ſerpents of the Egyptian magicians, ſo will it devour all that viperous brood of iniquity, which our magical ſelf-will, by her witchcraft, and enchantments, begets within us: like a ſtrong and vehement flame within us, it will conſume this whole body of death: it is compared by our Saviour to leaven that will ferment the whole maſs in which it is wrapped up: it will enter into us like the refiner's fire, and the fuller's ſoap: like the angel of God's preſence which he promiſed to ſend along with the *Iſraelites* in their journey to *Canaan*, it will not pardon our iniquities, nor indulge any darling luſt whatſoever: it will narrowly pry into all our actions, and be ſpying out all theſe backways and doors whereby ſin and vice may enter.

That religion which exerts itſelf in particularities only, and is overſwayed by the prevailing power of any luſt, is but a dead carcaſs, and not indeed that true living religion which comes from heaven, and which will not ſuffer itſelf to be confined; that will not indent with us, or article upon our terms and conditions, but, as *Sampſon* of old, will break all thoſe bonds with which our fleſhly and harlot-like wills would tie it, and become every way abſolute within us. And ſo I paſs to the ſecond thing wherein men are apt to delude themſelves in taking an eſtimate of their own religion, *viz.*

## CHAP. III.

2. *A Mere compliance of the outward man with the law of God.* There is * *an outward and an inward man* which philoſophy hath acknowledged as well as our chriſtian divinity: and when religion ſeats itſelf in the centre of mens ſouls, it acts there moſt ſtrongly upon the vital powers of it, and firſt brings the inward man into a true and chearful obedience to the



* ἔξω & ἔσω ἄνθρωπος.

law of God, before all the ſeditious and rebellious motives of the external or animal man be quite ſubdued. But a ſuperficial religion many times intermeddles only with the circumference and outſide of men; it only lodges in the ſuburbs, and ſtorms the outworks, but enters not the main fort of men's ſouls, which is ſtrongly defended by inward pride, ſelf-will, particular and worldly loves, fretting and ſelf-conſuming envy, popularity and vain-glory, and ſuch other mental vices, that when they are beaten out of the viſible behaviours and converſations of men by divine threats or promiſes (which may be too potent to be controuled) retreat and ſecure themſelves here as in a ſtrong caſtle. There may be many who dare not purſue revenge, and yet are not willing to forgive injuries; who dare not murder their enemy, that yet cannot love him; who dare not ſeek for preferment by bribery, who yet are not mortified to theſe and many other mundane and baſe-born affections: they are not willing that the divine prerogative ſhould extend itſelf beyond the outward man, and that religion ſhould be too buſy with their inward thoughts and paſſions: if they may not by proud boaſting ſet off their own ſorry commodities upon the public ſtage, and there read out their own panegyrics; yet they will inwardly applaud themſelves, and, not feeling the mighty power of any higher good, they will endeavour to preſerve an unhallowed independency and feeling ſenſe of themſelves; and by a ſullen melancholly ſtoiciſm, when religion would deprive and bereave them of the ſinful glory and pleaſures of this outward world, they then retire and ſhrink themſelves up into a centre of their own, they collect and contract themſelves into themſelves. Thus when this low life of men's ſouls is chaſed out of the external vices and vanities of this world by the chaſtiſements of their own conſciences, or many times by bodily oppreſſions; it preſently retires into itſelf, and by a ſelf-feeling begins more to graſp and dearly embrace itſelf. When theſe external loves begin to be ſtarved and cooled, yet men may then fall into

into love with and courting of themſelves by arrogancy, ſelf-confidence and dependence, ſelf-applauſe and gratulations, admiration of their own perfections; and ſo feed that dying life of theirs with this ſpeculative wantonneſs, that it may as ſtrongly expreſs itſelf within them, as before it did without themſelves. Men may by inwardly adorning of themſelves ſacrilegiouſly ſteal God's glory from him, and erect a ſelf-ſupremacy within, exerting itſelf in ſelf-will and particular loves, and ſo become corrivals with God for the crown of bleſſedneſs and ſelf ſufficiency, as I doubt many of the *Stoics*, endeavoured, with a giant-like ambition, to do.

But alas, I doubt we generally arrive not to this pitch of religion, to deny the world, and all the pomp and glory of this largely-extended train of vanity; but we eaſily content ourſelves with ſome external forms of religion. We are too apt to look at a gariſh dreſs and attire of religion, or to be enamoured rather with ſome more ſpecious and ſeemingly-ſpiritual forms, than with the true ſpirit and power of godlineſs and religion itſelf. We are more taken commonly with the ſeveral new faſhions which the luxuriant fancies of men are apt to contrive for it, than with the real power and ſimplicity thereof: and while we think ourſelves to be growing in our knowledge, and moving on towards a ſtate of perfection, we do but turn up and down from one kind of form to another; we are as apt ſtill to draw it down into as low, worldly and mundane rites and ordinances, as ever it was before our Saviour made that glorious reformation therein, which took away theſe material crutches made of carnal obſervances upon which earthly minds ſo much lean, and are fain to underprop their religion with, which elſe would tumble down and fall to nothing: except we can caſt it into ſuch a certain ſet of duties and ſyſtem of opinions, that we may ſee it altogether from one end to another, we are afraid leſt it ſhould become too abſtruſe a thing and vaniſh away from us.

I would not be miſunderſtood to ſpeak againſt thoſe duties and ordinances which are neceſſary means ap-

pointed by God to promote us in the ways of piety: but I fear we are too apt to ſink all our religion into theſe, and ſo to embody it, that we may as it were, touch and feel it, becauſe we are ſo little accquainted with the high and ſpiritual nature of it, which is too ſubtile for groſs and carnal minds to converſe with. I fear our vulgar ſort of chriſtians are wont ſo to look upon ſuch kind of models of divinity and religious performances, which were intended to help our dull minds to a more lively ſenſe of God and true goodneſs, as thoſe things that claim the whole of their religion: and therefore are too apt to think themſelves abſolved from it, except at ſome ſolemn times of more ſpecial addreſſes to God; and that this wedding-garment of holy thoughts and divine affections is not for every days wearing, but only then to be put on when we come to the marriage-feaſt and feſtivals of heaven: as if religion were faſt locked and bound up in ſome ſacred ſolemnities, and ſo incarcerated and incorporated into ſome divine myſteries, as the ſuperſtitious heathen of old thought, that it might not ſtir abroad and wander too far out of theſe hallowed cloiſters, and grow too buſy with us in our ſecular employments. We have learned to diſtinguiſh too ſubtily I doubt in our lives and converſations, between our religious approaches to God, and our worldly affairs. I know our converſation and demeanour in this world is not, nor can well be, all of a piece, and there will be ſeveral degrees of ſanctity in the lives of the beſt men, as there were once in the land of *Canaan:* but yet I think a good man ſhould always find himſelf upon holy ground, and never depart ſo far into the affairs of this life, as to be without either the call or compaſs of religion; he ſhould always think whereſoever he is, that God and the bleſſed angels are there, with whom he ſhould converſe in a way of purity. We muſt not think that religion ſerves to paint our faces, to reform our looks, or only to inform our heads, or inſtruct and tune our tongues; no, nor only to tye our hands, and make our outward man more demure, and bring our bodies and bodily actions into a better decorum: but its main

buſineſs

buſineſs is to reform our hearts and to correct all the actions and motions thereof. And ſo I come to a third particular wherein we are apt to misjudge ourſelves in matters of religion.

## CHAP. IV.

ANother particular wherein men miſtake religion, is, *A conſtrained and forced obedience to God's commandments.* That which many men (amongſt whom ſome would ſeem to be moſt abhorrent from ſuperſtition) call their religion, is indeed nothing elſe but a *ſuperſtition*, that I may uſe the word in its antient and proper ſenſe, as it imports *ſuch an apprehenſion of God as renders him grievous to men, and ſo deſtroys all free and chearful converſe with him, and begets inſtead thereof a forced and dry devotion, void of inward life and love* *. Thoſe ſervile ſpirits which are not acquainted with God and his goodneſs, may be ſo haunted by the frightful thoughts of a Deity, as to be ſcarred and terrified into ſome worſhip and obſervance of him. They are apt to look upon him as one clothed with auſterity, or in the language of the unprofitable ſervant in the goſpel, *an hard maſter* †; and therefore they think ſomething muſt be done to pleaſe him, and to mitigate his ſeverity towards them: and though they cannot truly love him, having no inward ſenſe of his lovelineſs, yet they cannot but ſerve him ſo far as theſe rigorous apprehenſions conſtrain them; though notwithſtanding ſuch as theſe are very apt to perſuade themſelves that they may pacify him and purchaſe his favour with ſome cheap ſervices, as if heaven itſelf might be bribed, and an immutable

* See the tract of ſuperſtition.

† Or, as the *Epicurean* poet hath too truly painted out their thoughts, as a *ſævus dominus*.

mutable juſtice be flattered into partiality and reſpect of perſons. Becauſe they are not acquainted with God, and know him not as he is in himſelf, therefore they are ready to paint him forth to themſelves in their own ſhape: and becauſe they themſelves are full of peeviſhneſs and ſelf-will, arbitrarily impoſing and preſcribing to others without ſufficient evidence of reaſon, and are eaſily inticed by flatteries, they are apt to repreſent the divinity alſo to themſelves in the ſame form, and think they view the true portraiture of their own genius in it; and therefore that they may pleaſe this angry Deity of their own making, they are willing ſometimes to be laviſh in ſuch a kind of ſervice of him as doth not much thwart their own evil affections; nay, and it may be too, will ſeem to part with them ſometimes, and give them a weeping farewel, if God and their own awakened conſciences ſeem to frown upon them; though all their obedience ariſe from nothing elſe but the compulſions and neceſſities which their own dreadful apprehenſions of God lay upon them: and therefore in thoſe things which more nearly touch their own beloved luſts, they will be as ſparing as may be; here they will be as ſtrict with God as may be, that he may have no more than his due, as they think, like that unprofitable ſervant in the goſpel, that, becauſe his maſter was *an auſtere man, reaping where he had not ſown, and gathering where he had not ſcattered*, was content and willing that he ſhould have his own again, but would not ſuffer him to have any more.

This ſervile ſpirit in religion is always illiberal and needy in the great and weightier matters of religion, and here weighs out obedience by drams and ſcruples: it never finds itſelf more contracted, than when it is to converſe with God *; their dreadful thoughts of God, like a cold eaſtern wind, blaſts all their bloſſoming affections,

* Like thoſe creatures that are generated of ſlime and mud, the more the ſummer-ſun ſhines upon them, and the nearer it comes to them, the more is all their vital ſtrength dried up and ſpent away.

fections, and nips them in the bud: theſe exhauſt their native vigour, and make them weak and ſluggiſh in all their motions toward God. Their religion is rather matter of penance to them, than any voluntary compliance of their ſouls with the divine will: and yet becauſe they bear the burden and heat of the day, they think, that when the evening comes, they ought to be more liberally rewarded; ſuch ſlaviſh ſpirits being ever apt inwardly to conceit that Heaven receives ſome emolument or other by their hard labours, and ſo becomes indebted to them, becauſe they ſee no true gain and comfort accruing from them to their own ſouls; and ſo, becauſe they do God's work and not their own, they think they may reaſonably expect a fair recompence, as having been profitable to him. And this I doubt was the firſt and vulgar foundation of merit: tho' now the world is aſhamed to own it.

But alas, ſuch an ungodlike religion as this can never be owned by God: the bond-woman and her ſon muſt be caſt out. The ſpirit of true religion is of a more free, noble, ingenuous, and generous nature, ariſing out of the warm beams of the divine love which firſt brought it forth; and therefore is it afterwards perpetually bathing itſelf in that ſweeteſt love which firſt begot it, and is always refreſhed and nouriſhed by it. This *love caſteth out fear, fear which hath torment in it*, 1 John iv. 18. and is therefore more apt to chaſe away ſouls once wounded with it from God, than to allure them to God. Such fear of God always carries in it a ſecret antipathy againſt him, as being *one that is ſo troubleſome, that there is no quiet or peaceable living with him* *. Whereas love, by a ſtrong ſympathy, draws the ſouls of men, when it hath once laid hold upon them, by its powerful inſinuation, into the neareſt conjunction that may be with the Divinity; it thaws all thoſe affections which a ſlaviſh fear had congealed, and makes the ſoul moſt chearful, free, and nobly reſolved in all its motions after God. It was well obſerved of old by *Pythagoras*, *We are never ſo well as when we approach to God* †; when,

* λυπηρὸν & ἐλεύθερον, as *Plutarch* ſpeaks.

† βέλτιστοι γινόμεθα πρὸς τὸν θεὸν βαδίζοντες.

when, in a way of religion, we make our addreſſes to God, then are our ſouls moſt chearful. True religion, and an inward acquaintance with God, diſcovers nothing in him but pure and ſincere goodneſs, nothing that might breed the leaſt diſtaſte or diſſaffection, or carry in it any ſemblance of diſpleaſingneſs, and therefore the ſouls of good men are never ſparing in their affections: then the torrent is moſt full and ſwells higheſt, when it empties itſelf into this unbounded ocean of the Divine Being. This makes all the commandments of God light and eaſy, and far from being grievous. There needs no law to compel a mind acted by the true ſpirit of divine love to ſerve God, or to comply with his will *. It is the choice of ſuch a ſoul to endeavour to conform itſelf to him, and draw from him, as much as may be, an imitation of that goodneſs and perfection which it finds in him. Such a Chriſtian does not therefore obey his commands only becauſe it is God's will he ſhould do ſo, but becauſe he ſees the law of God to be truly perfect, as *David* ſpeaks, Pſal. xix. 7. his nature being reconciled to God, finds it all holy, juſt and good, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, Rom. vii. 12. and ſuch a thing as his ſoul loves, *ſweeter than the honey or the honey-comb*; and makes it *his meat and drink to do the will of God*, as our Lord and ſaviour did. And ſo I paſs to the fourth and laſt particular wherein religion is ſometimes miſtaken.

## CHAP. V.

THE fourth and laſt particular wherein men miſjudge themſelves, is, *When a mere mechanical and artificial religion is taken for that which is a true impreſſion of Heaven upon the ſouls of men, and which moves like an inward nature.* True religion will not ſtoop to rules of

* *Quis legem det amantibus?*
*Major lex amor eſt ſibi.*
Boetius l. 3. De Conſol. Philoſ.

of art, nor be confined within the narrow compaſs thereof: no, where it is, we may cry out with the *Greek* philoſopher, *There is ſome divinity within* *. God hath there kindled as it were his own life, which will move and act only according to the laws of heaven. But there are ſome mechanical Chriſtians, who can frame and faſhion out religion ſo cunningly in their own ſouls, by that book-ſkill they have got of it, that it may many times deceive themſelves, as if it were a true living thing. We often hear that mere pretenders to religion may go as far, in all the external acts of it, as thoſe that are beſt acquainted with it: I doubt not alſo but many times there may be artificial imitations drawn of that which only lives in the ſouls of good men, by the powerful and wily magic of exalted fancies; as we read of ſome artificers that have made ſuch images of living creatures, wherein they have not only drawn forth the outward ſhape, but ſeem almoſt to have copied out the life too in them. Men may make an imitation as well of thoſe things which we call the internals of religion, as of the externals. There may be a ſemblance of inward joy in God, of love to him and his precepts, of dependance upon him, and a filial reverence of him; which, by the contrivance and power of fancy, may be repreſented in a maſk upon the ſtage of the animal part of a man's ſoul. Thoſe Chriſtians who derive all their religion from pious books and diſcourſes, hearing of ſuch and ſuch ſigns of grace and evidences of ſalvation, and being taught to believe they muſt get thoſe, that ſo they may go to heaven; may preſently begin to ſet themſelves on work, and in an apiſh imitation cauſe their animal powers and paſſions to repreſent all theſe; and fancy being well acquainted with all thoſe ſeveral affections in the ſoul, that at any time expreſs themſelves towards outward things, may, by the power it hath over the paſſions, call them all forth in the ſame mode and faſhion, and then conjoin with them ſome thoughts of God and divine things, which may ſerve, thus put together, for a handſome

* ἐστ τις Θεὸς ἔνδον.

handſome artifice of religion, wherein theſe mechanics may much applaud themſelves.

I doubt not but there may be ſuch, who, to gain credit with themſelves, and that glorious name of being the children of God, (tho' they know nothing more of it, but that it is a title that ſounds well,) would uſe their beſt ſkill to appear ſuch to themſelves, ſo qualified and moulded as they are told they muſt be. And, as many times credit and reputation among men may make them poliſh the ruggedneſs of their outward man; ſo to gain their own good opinion, and a reputation with their own conſciences, which look more inwardly, they may alſo endeavour to make their inward man look at ſometimes more ſmooth and comely: and it is no hard matter for ſuch *Chamæleon*-like Chriſtians, to turn even their inſides into whatſoever hue and colour ſhall beſt pleaſe them; and then, *Narciſſus* like, to fall in love with themſelves: a ſtrong and nimble fancy having ſuch command over the animal ſpirits, that it can ſend them forth in full troops which way ſoever it pleaſeth, and, by their aid, call forth and raiſe any kind of paſſion it liſteth, and, when it liſteth, allay it again: imagination may ſtamp any idea that it finds within itſelf upon the paſſions, and turn them as it pleaſeth to what ſeal it will ſet upon them, and mould them into any likeneſs; and a man, looking down, and taking a view of the plot as it is acted upon the ſtage of the animal powers, may like and approve it as a true plat-form of religion. Thus may they eaſily deceive themſelves, and think their religion to be ſome mighty thing within them, that runs quite thro' them, and makes all theſe transformations within them; whereas the riſe and motion of it may be all in the animal and ſenſitive powers of the ſoul; and a wiſe obſerver of it may ſee whence it comes and whither it goes: it being indeed a thing which is from the earth, earthly, and not like that true ſpirit of regeneration which comes from Heaven, and begets a divine life in the ſouls of good men, and is not under the command of any ſuch charms as theſe are, neither will it move according to thoſe laws, and times, and meaſures that we pleaſe to ſet to it: but

but we ſhall find it manifeſting its mighty ſupremacy over the higheſt powers of our ſouls. Whereas we may truly ſay of all mechanics in religion, and our mimical Chriſtians, that they are not ſo much actuated and informed by their religion, as they inform that; the power of their own imagination affording that force to it, which bears it up and guides all its motions and operations. And therefore, they themſelves having the power over it, can new-mould it as themſelves pleaſe, according to any new pattern which ſhall like them better than the former: they can furniſh this domeſtic ſcene of theirs with any kind of matter which the hiſtory of other men's religion may afford them; and, if need be, act over all the experiences of that ſect of men to which they moſt addict themſelves, ſo to the life, that they may ſeem to themſelves as well experienced Chriſtians as any others; and ſo, it may be, ſoar ſo aloft in ſelf-conceit, as if they had already made their neſts amongſt the ſtars, and had viewed their own manſion in heaven. What was obſerved by the *Stoic* concerning the vulgar ſort of men, may as truly be ſaid of this ſort of Chriſtians, their life is nothing elſe but a ſtrong energy of fancy and opinion.

But beſides, leſt their religion might too groſsly diſcover itſelf to be nothing elſe but a piece of art, there may be ſometimes ſuch extraordinary motions ſtirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that they may ſeem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing elſe but the energy of their own ſelf-love, touched with ſome fleſhly apprehenſions of divine things, and excited by them. There are ſuch things in our Chriſtian religion, that, when a carnal and unhallowed mind takes the chair and gets the expounding of them, may ſeem very delicious to the fleſhly appetites of men: ſome doctrines and notions of free-grace and juſtification; the magnificent titles of ſons of God and heirs of Heaven; ever flowing ſtreams of joy and pleaſure, in which bleſſed ſouls ſhall ſwim to all eternity; a glorious paradiſe in the world to come, always ſpringing up with well-ſcented and fragrant beauties; a New *Jeruſalem* paved with

gold and beſpangled with ſtars, comprehending in its vaſt circuit ſuch numberleſs varieties, that a buſy curioſity may ſpend itſelf about to all eternity. I doubt not but that ſometimes the moſt fleſhly and earthly men who fly their ambition at the pomp of this world, may be ſo raviſhed with the conceits of ſuch things as theſe, that they may ſeem to be made partakers of *the powers of the world to come*, Heb. vi. 5.; I doubt not but that they may be as much exalted with them, as the ſouls of crazed and diſtracted perſons ſeem to be ſometimes, when their fancies play with thoſe quick and nimble ſpirits which a diſtempered frame of body and unnatural heat in their heads beget within them. Thus may theſe blazing comets riſe up above the moon, and climb higher than the ſun; which yet, becauſe they have no ſolid conſiſtency of their own, and are of a baſe and earthly allay, will ſoon vaniſh and fall down again, being only born up by an external force. They may ſeem to themſelves to have attained higher than thoſe noble Chriſtians who are gently moved by the natural force of true goodneſs; they may ſeem to be more full of the Deity than thoſe who are really informed and actuated by the Divine Spirit, and do move on ſteddily and conſtantly in the way towards heaven; as the ſeed that was ſown in the thorny ground, grew up and lengthened out its blade faſter than that which was ſown in the good and fruitful ſoil. And, as the motions of our ſenſe, fancy, and paſſions, while our ſouls are in this mortal condition, ſunk down deeply into the body, are many times more vigorous, and make ſtronger impreſſions upon us than thoſe of the higher powers of the ſoul, which are more ſubtile and remote from theſe mixt and animal perceptions; that devotion which is there ſeated may ſeem to have more energy and life in it than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch ſpreads itſelf upon the underſtanding, and from thence mildly diffuſes itſelf thro' our wills and affections. But however, the former may be more boiſterous for a time, yet this is of a more conſiſtent and thriving nature: for that proceeding indeed from nothing elſe but a ſenſual and fleſhly apprehenſion of God

God and true happineſs, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and, as the ſenſible powers and faculties grow more languid, or the ſun of divine light ſhines more brightly upon us, theſe earthly devotions, like our common houſhold fires, will abate their heat and fervour. But a true cœleſtial warmth will never be extinguiſhed, becauſe it is of an immortal nature; and being once ſeated vitally in the ſouls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner, as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and œconomy of the whole body under it, and ſends forth warm blood and ſpirits, and vital nouriſhment to every part and member of it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of paſſion; tho' theſe are too often miſtaken for it, when, in our jugglings in religion, we caſt a miſt before our own eyes: but it is a new nature informing the ſouls of men; it is a Godlike frame of ſpirit, diſcovering itſelf moſt of all in ſerene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekneſs, ſelf-denial, univerſal love of God and all true goodneſs, without partiality, and without hypocriſy; whereby we are taught to know God, and, knowing him, to love him, and conform ourſelves, as much as may be, to all that perfection which ſhines forth in him.

THE

# THE

# EXCELLENCY and NOBLENESS

# OF

# TRUE RELIGION,

1. In its Riſe and Original.
2. In its Nature and Eſſence.
3. In its Properties and Operations.
4. In its Progreſs.
5. In its Term and End.

# THE

# EXCELLENCY and NOBLENESS

# OF

# TRUE RELIGION.

PROVERBS XV. 24.

*The Way of Life is above to the wiſe, that he may depart from Hell beneath.*

## INTRODUCTION.

IN this whole book of the Proverbs we find *Solomon*, one of the eldeſt ſons of Wiſdom, always ſtanding up and calling her bleſſed: his heart was both enlarged and filled with the pure influences of her beams, and therefore was perpetually adoring that ſun which gave him light. *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her children*; though the baſe offſpring of darkneſs and children of folly ſee no beauty nor comelineſs in her, that they ſhould deſire her, as they ſaid of Chriſt, Iſaiah liii. 2. That mind which is not touched with an inward ſenſe of divine wiſdom, cannot eſtimate the true worth of it *. But when wiſdom once diſplays its own excellencies and glories in a purified ſoul, it is entertained there with the greateſt love and delight, and receives its own image reflected back to itſelf in ſweeteſt returns of love and praiſe.

* Τῆς σύνεσις γένοιτο τοῖς μὴ ἐφαπτομένοις.

praiſe. We have a clear manifeſtation of this ſacred ſympathy in *Solomon*, whom we may not unfitly call an inſtrument which Wiſdom herſelf had tuned to play her divine leſſons upon: his words were *, Eccleſ. 12. every where full of divine ſweetneſs matched with ſtrength and beauty, or, as himſelf phraſeth it, *like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver*, Prov. xxv. 11. The mind of a Proverb is to utter wiſdom in a myſtery, as the Apoſtle ſometime ſpeaks, and to wrap up divine truth in a kind of ænigmatical way, though in vulgar expreſſions. Which method of delivering divine doctrine (not to mention the writings of the antient Philoſophers) we find frequently purſued in the holy ſcripture, thereby both opening and hiding at once the truth which is offered to us. A proverb or parable being once unfolded, by reaſon of its affinity with the fancy, the more ſweetly inſinuates itſelf into that, and is from thence with the greater advantage tranſmitted to the underſtanding. In this ſtate we are not able to behold truth in its own native beauty and luſtre; but while we are vailed with mortality, truth muſt vail itſelf too, that it may the more freely converſe with us. St. *Auſtin* hath well aſſigned the reaſon why we are ſo much delighted with metaphors, and allegories, becauſe they are ſo much proportioned to our ſenſes, with which our reaſon hath contracted an intimacy and familiarity. And therefore God, to accommodate his truth to our weak capacities, does as it were embody it in earthly expreſſions; according to that antient maxim of the Cabbaliſts, *The light from above never deſcends without a mantle* †.

Thus much by way of preface or introduction to theſe words, being one of *Solomon*'s excellent proverbs,

*viz.*

* דברי חפץ.

† *Lumen ſupernum nunquam deſcendit ſine indumento*; agreeable to which is that of *Dionyſius Areop.* not ſeldom quoted by the ſchool-men, *impoſſibile eſt nobis aliter lucere radium divinum, niſi varietate ſacrorum velaminum circumvelatum.* His words in the *Greek* are theſe, οὐδὲ δυνατὸν ἑτερως ἡμῖν ἐκλάμψαι τὴν θεαρχικὴν ἀκτῖνα, μὴ τῇ ποικιλίᾳ τῶν ἱερῶν παραπετασμάτων ἀναγωγικῶς περικεκαλυμμένην. In Lib. de Cœleſt. Hierar. chap. 1.

*viz. The way of life is above to the wise.* Without running out into any critical curiosities about the words, I shall from them take occasion to set forth, *the nobleness and generous spirit of true religion*, which I suppose to be meant here by *the way of life.* The word here rendred *above* * may signify *That which is divine and heavenly, high and excellent* †. And in this sense I shall consider it, my purpose being from hence to discourse of *The excellent and noble spirit of true religion* (whether it be taken as it is in itself; or as it becomes an inward form and soul to the minds and spirits of good men;) and this in opposition to that *low and base-born spirit of irreligion*, which is perpetually sinking from God, till it couches to the very centre of misery, *The lowermost hell* ‡.

In discoursing upon this argument, I shall observe this method; *viz.* I shall consider *the excellency and nobleness of true religion.*

1. In its rise and original.
2. In its nature and essence.
3. In its properties and operations.
4. In its progress.
5. In its term and end.

## CHAP. I.

WE begin with the first, *viz. True religion is a noble thing in its rise and original, and in regard of its descent.* True religion derives its pedigree from heaven ||, it comes from heaven, and constantly moves toward

* למעלה.

† As the word ἄνω does in the New Testament, τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως, Phil. iii. 14. τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, Col. iii. 2. St. *Austin*, supposeth the things of religion, to be meant by the τὰ ἄνω, *superna*, for this reason, *quòd merito excellentiæ longè superant res terrenas.*

‡ שאול מטה.

|| βλάστημα τῦ ὐρανῦ.

toward heaven again: it is a beam from God, as *every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning*, as St. *James* ſpeaks, i. 17. God is the firſt truth and primitive goodneſs: true religion is a vigorous efflux and emanation of both upon the ſpirits of men, and therefore is called, *a participation of the divine nature*, 2 Peter i. 4. Indeed God hath copied out himſelf in all created being, having no other pattern to frame any thing by but his own eſſence; ſo that all created being is a ſhadowy repreſentation of the uncreated eſſence, and is, by ſome ſtamp or other of God upon it, at leaſt remotely allied to him: but true religion is ſuch a communication of the divinity, as none but the higheſt of created beings are capable of. On the other ſide, ſin and wickedneſs is of the baſeſt and loweſt original, as being nothing elſe but a perfect degeneration from God and thoſe eternal rules of goodneſs which are derived from him. Religion is an heaven-born thing, the ſeed of God in the ſpirits of men, whereby they are formed to a ſimilitude and likeneſs of himſelf. A true Chriſtian is every way of a moſt noble extraction, of an heavenly and divine pedigree, being born *from above* *, as it is expreſſed John iii. 31. The line of all earthly nobility, if it were followed to the beginning, would lead to *Adam*, where all the lines of deſcent meet in one; and the root of all extractions would be found planted in nothing elſe but *Adamah*, red earth: Gen. ii. 7. but a Chriſtian derives his line from Chriſt, who is the only begotten Son of God, *The ſhining forth of his glory, and the character of his perſon*, as he is ſtiled, Heb. i. 3. We may truly ſay of Chriſt and chriſtians, as *Zebah* and *Zalmunna* ſaid of *Gideon*'s brethren, *As he is, ſo are they* (according to their capacity,) *each one reſembling the children of a king*. Judges viii. 18. Titles of worldly honour in heaven's heraldry are but only empty names; but titles of divine dignity ſignify ſome real thing, ſome real and divine communications to the ſpirits and minds of men. All perfections

* ἄνωθεν.

perfections and excellencies in any kind are to be meaſured by their approach to that primitive perfection of all, God himſelf; and therefore participation of the divine nature cannot but entitle a chriſtian to the higheſt degree of dignity: *Behold what manner of love the Father hathbeſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God,* 1 John iii. 1.

Thus much for a more general diſcovery of the nobleneſs of religion as to its fountain and original; we may further and more particularly take notice of this in reference to that twofold fountain in God, from whence all true religion flows, *viz.* 1. *His immutable nature.* 2. *His will.*

1. *The immutable nature of God.* From thence ariſe all thoſe eternal rules of truth and goodneſs which are the foundation of all religion, and which God at the firſt creation folded up in the ſoul of man. Theſe we may call the *truths of natural inſcription*; underſtanding hereby either thoſe fundamental principles of truth which reaſon by a naked intuition may behold in God, or thoſe neceſſary corollaries and deductions which may be drawn from thence. I cannot think it ſo proper to ſay, that God ought infinitely to be beloved becauſe he commands it, as becauſe he is indeed an infinite and unchangeable goodneſs. God hath ſtamped a copy of his own archetypal lovelineſs upon the ſoul, that man by reflecting into himſelf might behold there the glory of God, ſee within his ſoul all thoſe ideas of truth which concern the nature and eſſence of God, by reaſon of its own reſemblance of God; and ſo beget within himſelf the moſt free and generous motions of love to God. Reaſon in man being a light flowing from the fountain and father of lights *, it was to enable man to work out of himſelf all thoſe notions of God, which are the true ground-work of love and obedience to God, and conformity to him: and in moulding the inward man

* Being, as *Cicero* phraſeth it, *participata ſimilitudo rationis æternæ* (as the law of nature, the νόμος γραπτὸς, the law written in man's heart, is *participatio legis æternæ in rationali natura.*

man into the greateſt conformity to the nature of God, was the perfection and efficacy of the religion of nature. But ſince man's fall from God, the inward virtue and vigour of reaſon is much abated, the ſoul having ſuffered as *Plato* ſpeaks, *moulting of its wings* *. Thoſe principles of divine truth which were firſt ingraven upon mans heart with the finger of God are now, as the characters of ſome antient monuments, leſs clear and legible than at firſt. And therefore beſides the truth of natural inſcription,

2. God hath provided the truth of divine revelation, which iſſues forth from his own free will, and clearly diſcovers the way of our return to God, from whom we are fallen. And this truth, with the effects and productions of it in the minds of men, the ſcripture is wont to ſet forth under the name of *grace*, as proceeding merely from the free bounty and overflowings of the divine love. Of this revealed will is that of the Apoſtle to be underſtood, *None hath known the things of God*; 1 Cor. ii. 11. None, neither angel nor man, could know the mind of God, or ſearch out the counſels of his will. But God, out of the infinite riches of his compaſſions toward mankind, is pleaſed to diſcloſe his ſecrets, and moſt clearly to manifeſt *the way into the Holieſt of all*, Heb. ix. 3. and *bring life and immortality to light*, 2 Tim. i. 10. And in theſe laſt ages to ſend his Son, who lay in his boſom from all eternity, to teach us his will and declare his mind to us. When we *look unto the earth, then behold darkneſs and dimneſs of anguiſh*, that I may uſe thoſe words of the prophet Iſaiah viii. 22. But when we look towards heaven, then behold light breaking forth upon us, like the eyelids of the morning, and ſpreading its wings over the horizon of mankind ſitting in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, *to guide our feet into the way of peace*, Luke i. 79.

But beſides this outward revelation of God's will to men, there is alſo an inward impreſſion of it on their minds and ſpirits, which is in a more ſpecial manner attributed to God. We cannot ſee divine things, but in

* περορρύησις.

a divine light: God only, who is the true light, and in whom there is no darkneſs at all, can ſo ſhine out of himſelf upon our underſtandings, as to form in them a picture of himſelf, his own will and pleaſure, and turn the ſoul like wax or clay to the ſeal of his own light and love *. He that made our ſouls in his own image and likeneſs, can eaſily find a way into them. The word that God ſpeaks, having found a way into the ſoul, imprints itſelf there as with the point of a diamond †. Men may teach the grammar and rhetoric, but God teaches the divinity. Thus it is God alone that acquaints the ſoul with the truths of revelation: and he alſo it is that does ſtrengthen and raiſe the ſoul to better apprehenſions even of natural truth: *God being that in the intellectual world which the ſun is in the ſenſible* ‡, as ſome of the antient fathers love to ſpeak, and the antient philoſophers too, who meant God by their *active intellect*, whoſe proper work they ſuppoſed to be not ſo much to enlighten the object, as the faculty.

## CHAP. II.

WE have done with the firſt head, and come now to diſcourſe with the like brevity on another, (our purpoſe being to inſiſt moſt upon the third particular, viz. *The nobleneſs of religion in its properties*, after we have handled the ſecond) which is *The excellency and nobleneſs of religion in regard of its nature*, whether it be taken in the abſtract, or not; which we ſhall treat of promiſcuouſly,



* As the phraſe is in Job. xxxviii. 14. כחמר חותם.

† It becomes λόγος ἐγγεγραμμένος ἐν τῇ τοῦ μανθάνοντος ψυχῇ, that I may borrow *Plato*'s expreſſion.

‡ ὅπερ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς ὁ ἥλιος, τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς ὁ Θεὸς.

promiſcuouſly, without any rigid tying of ourſelves to exact rules of art: and ſo we ſhall glance at it in theſe following notions, riſing as it were ſtep by ſtep.

1. *A good man, who is attuated by religion, lives above the world and all mundane delights and excellencies.* The ſoul is a more vigorous and puiſſant thing, when it is once reſtored to the poſſeſſion of its own being, than to be bounded within the narrow ſphere of mortality, or to be ſtreightned within the narrow priſon of ſenſual and corporeal delights; but it will break forth with the greateſt vehemency, and aſcend upwards towards immortality; and when it converſes more intimately with religion, it can ſcarce look back upon its own converſes, (though in a lawful way) with earthly things, without being touched with an holy ſhamefacedneſs and a modeſt bluſhing; and, *It ſeems to be aſhamed that it ſhould be in the body* *. It is only true religion that teaches and enables men to die to this world and to all earthly things, and to riſe above that vaporous ſphere of ſenſual and earthly pleaſures, which darken the mind and hinder it from enjoying the brightneſs of divine light; the proper motion of religion is ſtill upwards to its firſt original. Whereas on the contrary the ſouls of wicked men being moiſtned with the exudations of their ſenſual parts, become heavy and ſink down into earthly things, and couch as near as may be to the centre †. Wicked men bury their ſouls in their bodies: all their projects and deſigns are bounded within the compaſs of this earth on which they tread. The fleſhly mind regards nothing but fleſh, and never riſes above the outward matter, but always creeps up and down like ſhadows upon the ſurface of the earth: and if it begins at any time to make any faint eſſays upwards, it preſently finds itſelf laden with a weight of ſenſuality which draws it down again. It was the opinion of the *Academics* that the ſouls of wicked men after

* As *Porphyry* ſpeaks of *Plotinus*, ἐῴκει μὲν αἰσχυνομένῳ ὅτι ἐν σώματί ἐστι.

† ὑποβρυχιαι συμπεριφέρονται, as *Plato* ſomewhere ſpeaks.

after their death could not of a long ſeaſon depart from the graves and ſepulchers where their mates were buried; but there wandred up and down in a deſolate manner, as not being able to leave thoſe bodies to which they were ſo much wedded in this life.

2 *A good man, one that is actuated by religion, lives in converſe with his own reaſon*; he lives at the height of his own being. This a great Philoſopher makes the property of a good man, *He knows how to converſe with himſelf, and truly to love and value himſelf* *: he meaſures not himſelf like the epicure, by his inferior and earthly part, but by an immortal eſſence and that of him which is from above; and ſo does *climb up to the height of that immortal principle which is within him* †. The Stoicks thought no man a fit auditor of their ethicks, till he were diſpoſſeſſed of that opinion, that man was nothing but *an union of ſoul and body* ‡. as profeſſing to teach men how to live only *according to intellectual reaſon* ‖, as they ſpeak. Perhaps their divinity was in ſome things too rigid; but I am ſure a good man acts the beſt of this their doctrine in the beſt ſenſe, and knows better how to reverence himſelf, without any ſelf-flattery or admiration, than ever any Stoick did. He principally looks upon himſelf as *being what he is rather by his ſoul than by his body* **: he values himſelf by his ſoul, that being which hath the greateſt affinity with God; and ſo does not ſeek himſelf in the fading vanities of this life, nor in thoſe poor and low delights of his ſenſes, as wicked men do; but as the philoſopher doth well expreſs it, *he ſeeks, as much*



* μόνος ὁ τὴν ἀρετὴν ἔχων ἑαυτῷ συγγίνεσθαι δύναται, καὶ σέβειν ἑαυτόν.

† ἐπὶ τὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀρχὴν ἀναβαίνειν.

‡ συμπλοκὴ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος.

‖ κατὰ λογον.

** κατὰ τὴν λογικὴν ζωὴν ὑσιωμένος, *Simplic. in Epict.*

*much as may be, to fly from the body, and to retire from bodily affections to converse with himself* *. And when the soul thus retires into itself, and views its own worth and excellency, it presently finds a chast and virgin love stirred up within itself towards itself, and is from within the more excited and obliged as *Simplicius* speaks *to mind the preserving of its own dignity and glory*†. To conclude this particular, a good man endeavours to walk by eternal and unchangeable rules of reason; reason in a good man sits in the throne, and governs all the powers of his soul in a sweet harmony and agreement with itself: whereas wicked men live only an opinionative life ‡ being misguided by the foolish fires of their own sensual apprehensions. In wicked men there is a democracy of wild passions, which violently hurry the soul up and down with restless motions. All sin and wickedness is a sedition stirred up in the soul ‖, by the sensitive powers against reason. It was one of the great evils that *Solomon* saw under the sun, *Servants upon horses, and Princes walking as servants upon the earth.* Eccles. x. 7. We may find the moral of it in all wicked men, whose souls are only as servants to wait upon their senses. In all such men the whole course of nature is turned upside down, and the cardinal points of motion in this little world are changed to contrary positions, but the motions of a good man are methodical, regular and concentrical to reason. It's a fond imagination that religion should extinguish reason; whenas religion makes it more illustrious and vigorous; and they who live most in the exercise of religion, shall find their reason most enlarged. I might add that reason in relation to the capacitating of man for converse with God was thought by some to be the formal difference of man. *Plutarch*, after a large debate whether brutes had not reason in them as well as man, concludes it

* ὅση δύναμις φεύγειν ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος βούλεται, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν σωματικῶν παθῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν συννεύειν.

† εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν τοῦ οἰκείου ἀξιώματος.

‡ ζωὴν δοξαστικήν.

‖ στάσις καὶ ὕβρις τῆς ψυχῆς.

it negatively upon this ground, *Becauſe they had no knowledge and ſenſe of the Deity* *. In *Cicero*'s account this capableneſs of religion ſeemed to be nothing different from rationality, and therefore he doubts not to give this for the moſt proper characteriſm of reaſon. And ſo with them (not to name others of the ſame apprehenſions) *a reaſonable creature* and *a creature capable of religion*, ſeemed to be of the like importance; reaſon as enabling and fitting man to converſe with God by knowing him and loving him, being a character moſt unqueſtionably differencing man from brute creatures.

3. *A good man, one that is informed by true religion, lives above himſelf, and is raiſed to an intimate converſe with the divinity.* He moves in a larger ſphere than his own being, and cannot be content to enjoy himſelf, except he may enjoy God too, and himſelf in God.

This we ſhall conſider two ways.

1. In the ſelf-denial of good men; they are content and ready to deny themſelves for God. I mean not that they ſhould deny their own reaſon, as ſome would have it; for that were to deny a beam of divine light, and ſo to deny God, inſtead of denying ourſelves for him. It is better reſolved by ſome philoſophers in this point, that *to follow reaſon* †, is *to follow God* ‡; and again, *to obey right reaſon, and to obey God, is one* ‖. But by ſelf-denial I mean, the ſoul's quitting all its own intereſt in itſelf, and an entire reſignation of itſelf to him as to all points of ſervice and duty: and thus the ſoul loves itſelf in God, and lives in the poſſeſſion not ſo much of its own being as of the divinity: deſiring only to be great in God, to glory in his light, and ſpread itſelf in his fulneſs; to be filled always by him, and to empty itſelf again into him; to receive all from him, and to expend all for him; and ſo to live not as its own, but



* οἷς ἂν ἐγγένηται Θεῦ νοησις.
† ἕπεσθαι λόγῳ,
‡ ἕπεσθαι Θεῷ.
‖ λόγῳ ὀρθῷ πείθεσθαι ἢ Θεῷ, ταυτόν ἐστι.

as God's. The higheſt ambition of a good man is to ſerve the will of God: he takes no pleaſure in himſelf, nor in any thing within himſelf further than as he ſees a ſtamp of God upon it. Whereas wicked men are impriſoned within the narrow circumference of their own beings, and perpetually frozen into a cold ſelf-love which binds up all the innate vigour of their ſouls, that it cannot break forth or expreſs itſelf in any noble way. The ſoul in which religion rules, ſays as St. *Paul* did, *I live; and yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. On the contrary, a wicked man ſwells in his own thoughts, and pleaſeth himſelf more or leſs with the imagination of a ſelf-ſufficiency. The *Stoics*, ſeeing they could not raiſe themſelves up to God, endeavour to bring down God to their own model, imagining the Deity to be nothing elſe but ſome greater kind of animal, and a wiſe man to be almoſt one of his peers *. And this is more or leſs the genius of wicked men, they will be ſomething in themſelves, they wrap up themſelves in their own being, move up and down in a ſphere of ſelf-love, live a profeſſed independency upon God, and maintain a diſtinction of property between God and themſelves. It is the character only of a good man to be able to deny and diſown himſelf, and to make a full ſurrender of himſelf unto God; forgetting himſelf, and minding nothing but the will of his Creator; triumphing in nothing more than in his own nothingneſs, and in the allneſs of the divinity. But indeed this his being nothing is the only way to be all things; this his having nothing, the trueſt way of poſſeſſing all things.

2. As a good man lives above himſelf in a way of ſelf-denial, ſo he lives alſo above himſelf as he lives in the enjoyment of God: and this is the very ſoul and eſſence of true religion, to unite the ſoul in the neareſt intimacy and conjunction with God, who is, as *Plotinus* ſpeaks, *The fountain of intellectual life, the root of the ſoul*

* *Sapiens cum diis ex pari vivit, deorum ſocius, non ſupplex*, Sen. in Ep. 52, & 31.

*ſoul* *. Then indeed the ſoul lives moſt nobly, when it feels itſelf *to live and move and have its being in God*; Acts xvii. 28. Which though the law of nature makes the common condition of all created being, yet it is only true religion that can give us a more feeling and comfortable ſenſe of it. God is not preſent to wicked men, when his almighty eſſence ſupports them and maintains them in being; *But he is preſent to him that can touch him* †, hath an inward feeling knowledge of God and is intimately united to him; *But to him that cannot thus touch him he is not preſent* ‡.

Religion is life and ſpirit, which flowing out from God who is he who hath life in himſelf, returns to him again as into its own original, carrying the ſouls of good men up with it. The ſpirit of religion is always aſcending upwards, and ſpreading itſelf through the whole eſſence of the ſoul, looſens it from a ſelf-confinement and narrowneſs, and ſo renders it more capacious of divine enjoyment. God envies not his people any good, but being infinitely bountiful is pleaſed to impart himſelf to them in this life, ſo far as they are capable of his communications: they ſtay not for all their happineſs till they come to heaven. Religion always carries its reward along with it, and when it acts moſt vigorouſly upon the mind and ſpirit of man, it then moſt of all fills it with an inward ſenſe of divine ſweetneſs. To conclude, to walk with God is in ſcripture made the character of a good man, and it is the higheſt perfection and privilege of created nature to converſe with the divinity. Whereas on the contrary wicked men converſe with nothing but their luſts and the vanities of this fading life, which here flatter them for a while with unhallowed delights and a mere ſhadow of contentment; and when theſe are gone, they find both ſubſtance and ſhadow too to be loſt eternally.

But

* πηγὴ ζωῆς, πηγὴ νῦ, ῥίζα ψυχῆς.

† ἀλλ' ἔστι τῷ δυναμένῳ θιγεῖν παρὸν, *Plotin.* En. 6. l. 9. c. 7.

‡ τῷ δ' ἀδυναλοῦντι ὐ πάρεστι.

But true goodneſs brings in a conſtant revenue of ſolid and ſubſtantial ſatisfaction to the ſpirit of a good man, delighting always to ſit by thoſe eternal ſprings which feed and maintain it: the ſpirit of a good man (as it is well expreſſed by the philoſopher) is always drinking in fountain-goodneſs, and fills itſelf more and more, till it be filled with all the fulneſs of God *.

## CHAP. III.

HAving diſcourſed of the nobleneſs of religion in its original and nature; we come now to conſider the excellency of religion in its properties, its proper effects and vital operations. In treating of this third particular we ſhall, (as formerly we have done) without tying ourſelves preciſely to any ſtrict rules of art and method, confound the notions of religion *in abſtracto* and *in concreto* together, treat them promiſcuouſly. As religion is a noble thing, 1. In reſpect of its *original*, 2. In reſpect of its *nature*; ſo alſo 3. In reſpect of its *properties* and *effects*.

1. The firſt property and effect of true religion whereby it expreſſeth its own nobleneſs is this, *That it widens and enlarges all the faculties of the ſoul, and begets a true ingenuity, liberty and amplitude, the moſt free and generous ſpirit in the minds of good men.* Thoſe in whom religion rules are *the ſons of joy*†, there is a true generous ſpirit within them, which ſhews the nobleneſs of their extraction. The *Jews* have a good maxim to this purpoſe, *None truly noble, but he who applies himſelf to religion and a faithful obſervance of the divine law* ‡. *Tully*

* ἀκινήτως ἐνίδρυται ἐν τῇ ὑσίᾳ της θέας ἀγαθότητος.

† בני חורים

‡ אין בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתורה

Pirke Avoth cap. 6.

*Tully* could ſee ſo much in his natural philoſophy as made him ſay, *The knowledge of nature enlarges the mind and raiſes it to the contemplation of divine things* *. But this is moſt true of religion, that in an higher ſenſe it does work the ſoul into a true and divine amplitude. There is a living ſoul of religion in good men, which ſpreading itſelf through all their faculties, ſpirits all the wheels of motion, and enables them to dilate and extend themſelves more fully upon God and all divine things, without being pinched or ſtreightned within themſelves. Whereas wicked men are of moſt narrow and confined ſpirits, they are ſo contracted by the pinching particularities of earthly and created things, ſo impriſoned in a dark dungeon of ſenſuality and ſelfiſhneſs, ſo ſtreightned through their carnal deſigns and ends, that they cannot ſtretch themſelves, nor look beyond the horizon of time and ſenſe.

The nearer any being comes to God, who is that infinite fulneſs which fills all in all, the more vaſt and large and unbounded it is; as the further it ſlides from him, the more it is ſtreightned and confined; as *Plato* hath long ſince concluded concerning the condition of ſenſual men, that they live *like a ſhell-fiſh* †, and can never move up and down but in their own priſon, which they ever carry about with them. Were I to define ſin, I would call it, *The ſinking of a man's ſoul from God into a ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs.* All the freedom that wicked men have, is but (like that of baniſhed men) to wander up and down in the wilderneſs of this world from one den and cave to another.

The more high and noble any being is, ſo much the deeper root have all its innate virtues and properties within it, and are by ſo much the more univerſal in their iſſues and actings upon other things: and ſuch an inward living principle of virtue and activity further heightned and united and informed with light and truth, we may call liberty. Of this truly noble and divine

* *Scientia naturæ ampliat animum, & ad divina attollit.*

† ὀστέου ὄκτρυ.

divine liberty religion is the mother and nurſe, leading the ſoul to God, and ſo impregnating that inward vital principle of activity and vigour that is emboſomed in it, that it is able without any inward diſturbance and reſiſtance from any controlling luſts to exerciſe itſelf, and act with the greateſt complacency in the moſt full and ample manner upon that firſt, univerſal and unbounded eſſence which is God himſelf. The moſt generous freedom can never be taken in its full and juſt dimenſions and proportion, but then when all the powers of the ſoul exerciſe and ſpend themſelves in the moſt large and ample manner upon the infinite and eſſential goodneſs, as upon their own moſt proper object. If we ſhould aſk a good man, when he finds himſelf beſt at eaſe, when he finds himſelf moſt free; his anſwer would be, when he is under the moſt powerful conſtraints of divine love. There are a ſort of mechanical chriſtians in the world, who not finding religion acting like a living form within them, ſatisfy themſelves only to make an art of it, and rather inform and actuate it, than are informed by it; and ſetting it ſuch bounds and limits as may not exceed the ſhort and ſcant meaſures of their own home-born principles, then they endeavour to fit the notions of their own minds as ſo many examples to it; and it being a circle of their own making, they can either enlarge or contract it accordingly as they can force their own minds and diſpoſitions to agree and ſuit with it. But true religion indeed is no art, but an inward nature that contains all the laws and meaſures of its motion within itſelf. A good man finds not his religion without him, but as a living principle within him; and all his faculties are ſtill endeavouring to unite themſelves more and more in the neareſt intimacy with it as with their proper perfection. There is that amiableneſs in religion, that ſtrong ſympathy between the ſoul and it, that it needs carry no teſtimonials or commendations along with it. If it could be ſuppoſed that God ſhould plant a religion in the ſoul which had no affinity or alliance with it, it would grow there but as a ſtr ange ſlip. But God

God when he gives his laws to men, does not by virtue of his abſolute dominion dictate any thing at random, and in ſuch an arbitrary way as ſome imagine; but he meaſures all by his own eternal goodneſs. Had God himſelf been any thing elſe than the firſt and greateſt good of man, then, to have loved him with the full ſtrength of all our faculties ſhould not have been *the firſt and greateſt commandment*, as our Saviour tells us it is. Some are apt to look upon God as a peeviſh and ſelf-willed being, becauſe themſelves are ſuch: and ſeeing that their own abſolute and naked wills are for the moſt part the rules of all their actions, and the impoſitions which they lay upon others; they think that heaven's monarchy is ſuch an arbitrary thing too, as being governed by nothing elſe but by an almighty abſolute will. But the ſoul that is acquainted moſt intimately with the divine will, would more certainly reſolve us, that God's unchangeable Goodneſs (which makes the divinity an uniform thing and to ſettle together upon its own centre, as I may ſpeak with reverence) is alſo the unchangeable rule of his will; neither can he any more ſwerve from it, than he can ſwerve from himſelf. Nor does he charge any duty upon man without conſulting firſt of all with his goodneſs, which being the original and adequate object of a good man's will and affections, it muſt needs be, that all the iſſues and effluxes of it be entertained with an anſwerable complacency and chearfulneſs. This is the hinge upon which all true religion turns, the proper centre about which it moves; which taking a faſt and ſure hold of an innate and correſpondent principle in the ſoul of man, raiſeth it up above the confines of mortality, and in the day of its mighty power makes it become a free-will-offering unto God.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

THE ſecond property or effect of religion, whereby it diſcovers its own nobleneſs (and it is ſomewhat a-kin to the former particular, and will help further to illuſtrate and enforce it) is this, *That it reſtores a good man to a juſt power and dominion over himſelf and his own will, enables him to overcome himſelf, his own ſelf-will and paſſions, and to command himſelf and all his powers for God.* 'Tis only religion that reſtores that *ſelf-dominion** to which the Stoical philoſophy ſo impotently pretended to; it is this only that enthrones man's depoſed reaſon, and eſtabliſheth within him a juſt empire over all thoſe blind powers and paſſions which ſo impetuouſly rend a man from the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of himſelf. Thoſe turbulent and unruly, uncertain and unconſtant motions of paſſion and ſelf-will which dwell in degenerate minds, divide them perpetually from themſelves, and are always exciting various factions and tumultuous combinations within them againſt the dominion of reaſon. And the only way to unite man firmly to himſelf is by uniting him to God, and eſtabliſhing in him a firm amity and agreement with the firſt and primitive being.

There is nothing in the world ſo boiſterous as a man's own ſelf-will, which is never guided by any fixt or ſteddy rules, but is perpetually hurried to and fro by a blind and furious impulſe of pride and paſſions iſſuing from within itſelf. This is the true ſource and ſpring of all that envy, malice, bitterneſs of ſpirit, malcontentedneſs and impatiency, of all thoſe black and dark paſſions, thoſe inordinate deſires and luſts, which reign in the hearts and lives of wicked men. A man's own ſelf-will throws him out of all true enjoyment of his own being: therefore it was our Saviour's counſel to

* ἀυτεξούσιον.

to his disciples, *in patience possess your souls*, Luke xxi. 19. We may say of that self-will which is lodged in the heart of a wicked man, as the *Jews* speak of the *evil imaginations* so often mentioned in their writings, that it is the prince of death and darkness, which is at continual enmity with Heaven, and the filthiness and poison of the serpent *. This is the seed of the evil spirit which is perpetually at enmity with the seed of God and the heaven-born nature: its design and scope is, with a giant-like pride, to climb up into the throne of the Almighty, and to establish an unbounded tyranny in contradiction to the will of God, which is nothing else but the issue and efflux of his eternal and unbounded goodness. This is the very heart of the old *Adam* that is within men. This is the hellish spirit of self-will: it would solely prescribe laws to all things; it eagerly wishes to be the source and fountain of all affairs and events; it would judge all things at its own tribunal. They, in whose spirits this principle rules, would have their own fancies and opinions, their perverse and boisterous wills to be the just square and measure of all good and evil; these are the plumb-lines which they apply to all things, in order to find out their rectitude or obliquity. He that will not submit himself to the eternal and uncreated will, but, instead of it, endeavours to set up his own will, makes himself the most real idol in the world, and exalts himself against all that is called God, and ought to be worshipped. To worship a graven image, or to make cakes, and burn incense to the Queen of heaven, is not a worse idolatry than it is for a man to set up self-will, to devote himself to the serving of it, and to give up himself to a compliance with his own will, as contrary to the divine and eternal will. When God made the world, he did not make it merely for the exercise of his Almighty power, and then throw it out of his hands, and leave it alone to subsist by itself as a thing



* זוהמא הנחש שר המית יצר הרע

that had no further relation to him: but he derived himſelf thro' the whole creation, ſo gathering all the ſeveral parts of it again; that, as the firſt production and the continued ſubſiſtence of all things, is from himſelf, ſo the ultimate reſolution of all things might be to him. Now, that which firſt endeavoured a divorce between God and his creation, and to make a conqueſt of it, was that diabolical arrogancy and ſelf-will that crept up and wound itſelf ſerpent-like into apoſtate minds and ſpirits. This is the true ſtrain of that helliſh nature, to live independently of God, and to derive the principles from another beginning, and carry on the line of all motions and operations to another end than God himſelf, by whom, and to whom, and for whom, all things ſubſiſt.

From what hath been ſaid concerning this powerful and dangerous enemy which wars againſt our ſouls and againſt the divine will, may the excellency and noble ſpirit of true religion appear, in that it tames the impetuouſneſs and turbulency of this ſelf-will. Then indeed does religion perform the higheſt and braveſt conqueſts, then does it diſplay the greatneſs of its ſtrength and the excellency of its power, when it overcomes this great *Arimanius*, that hath ſo firmly ſeated himſelf in the very centre of the ſoul. *Who is the man of courage and valour* † *? It is he that ſubdues his concupiſcence*, his own will; it is a *Jewiſh* maxim attributed to *Ben Zoma*, and a moſt undoubted truth. This was the grand leſſon that our great Lord and maſter came to teach us, *viz. To deny our own wills*; neither was there any thing that he endeavoured more to promote by his own example, as he tells us of himſelf. *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me*; John vi. 38. and again, *Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God, yea thy law is within my heart*, Pſalm xl. 7, 8. Hebrews x. 7. And, in his greateſt agonies, with a clear and chearful ſubmiſſion to the divine will, he often repeats it, *Not my will, but thy will be done*, Luke xxii. 42. Mark xiv. 36.: and ſo he hath taught

† מי גבור הכבש את יצרו *

taught us to pray, and ſo to live. This indeed is the true life and ſpirit of religion, this is religion in its meridian altitude, and juſt dimenſions. A true Chriſtian who hath power over his own will, may live nobly and happily, and enjoy a perpetually-clear heaven within the ſerenity of his own mind. When the ſea of this world is moſt rough and tempeſtuous about him, then can he ride ſafely at anchor within the haven, by a mild compliance of his will with God's will. He can look about him, and with an even and indifferent mind behold the world either to ſmile or frown upon him; neither will he abate of the leaſt of his contentment, for all the ill and unkind uſage he meets withal in this life. He that hath got the maſtery over his own will, feels no violence from without, finds no conteſts within; and, like a ſtrong man, keeping his houſe, he preſerves all his goods in ſafety: and, when God calls for him out of this ſtate of mortality, he finds in himſelf a power to lay down his own life; neither is it ſo much taken from him, as quietly and freely ſurrendered up by him. This is the higheſt piece of proweſs, the nobleſt atchievement, by which a man becomes Lord over himſelf, and the maſter of his own thoughts, motions, and purpoſes. This is the royal prerogative, the high dignity conferred upon good men by our Lord and Saviour, whereby they overcoming this both his and their enemy, their ſelf-will and paſſions, are enabled to ſit down with him in his throne, as he overcoming in another way, is *ſet down with his Father in his throne*, as the phraſe is, Revelat. iii. 21.

Religion begets the moſt heroic, free, and generous motions in the minds of good men. There is no where ſo much of a truly magnanimous and raiſed ſpirit as in thoſe who are beſt acquainted with the power of religion. Other men are ſlaves and captives to one vanity or other, but the truly religious is above them all, and able to command himſelf and all his powers for God. That bravery and gallantneſs which ſeems to be in the great *Nimrods* of this world, is nothing elſe but the ſwelling of their own unbounded pride and vain-glory. It hath been obſerved of the greateſt monarchs of the

world, that in the midſt of their triumphs they themſelves have been led captives to one vice or another. All the gallantry and puiſſance of which the braveſt ſpirits of the world boaſt, is but a poor confined thing, and extends itſelf only to ſome particular caſes and circumſtances: but the valour and puiſſance of a ſoul impregnated by religion hath, in a ſort, an univerſal extent, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks of himſelf, *I can do all things thro' Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*, Philip. iv. 13.; it is not determined to this or that particular object or time or place, but all things, whatſoever belong to a creature, fall under the level thereof. Religion is by St. *Paul* deſcribed to be the ſpirit of power in oppoſition to the ſpirit of fear, 2 Tim. i. 7.; as all ſin is by *Simplicius* well deſcribed to be impotency and weakneſs. Sin, by its deadly infuſions into the ſoul of man, waſtes the innate vigour of the ſoul, and caſts it into ſuch a deep lethargy, as that it is not able to recover itſelf: but religion, like that balſam of life, being once conveyed into the ſoul, awakens and enlivens it, and makes it renew its ſtrength like an eagle, and mount ſtrongly upwards towards heaven; and ſo uniting the ſoul to God, the centre of life and ſtrength, it renders it undaunted and invincible. Who can tell the inward life and vigour wherewith the ſoul may be filled, when once it is in conjunction with an Almighty Eſſence? There is a latent and hidden virtue in the ſoul of man which then begins to diſcover itſelf, when the Divine Spirit ſpreads forth its influences upon it. Every thing the more ſpiritual it is, and the higher and nobler it is in its being, the more active and vigorous it is; as the more any thing falls and ſinks into matter, the more dull and ſluggiſh and unwieldy it is. The *Platoniſts* were wont to call all things which participated moſt of matter *things that indeed are not* *. Now, nothing doth more purify, more ſublimate and exalt the ſoul than religion, when the ſoul ſuffers God to ſit within it as a refiner and purifier of ſilver, and when it abides the day of his coming; *for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's ſope*, Mal. iii. 2. Thus the ſoul being purified and

* ὄντως μὴ ὄντα.

and ſpiritualized, and changed more and more into the glorious image of God, is able to do all things, *out of weakneſs is made ſtrong*, gives proof of its divine vigour and activity, and ſhews itſelf to be a noble and puiſſant ſpirit, ſuch as God did at firſt create it.

## CHAP. V.

THE *third* property or effect whereby religion diſcovers its own excellency, is this, *That it directs and enables a man to propound to himſelf the beſt end and ſcope of life*, viz. *The glory of God the Higheſt Being, and his own aſſimilation, or becoming like unto God.*

That Chriſtian, in whom religion rules powerfully, is not ſo low in his ambitions as to purſue any of the things of this world as his ultimate purpoſe: his ſoul is too big for earthly deſigns and intereſts; but, underſtanding himſelf to come from God, he is continually returning to him again. It is unworthy of the mind of man to purſue any perfection lower than its own, or to aim at any end more ignoble than itſelf is. There is nothing which more ſtreightens and confines the free-born ſoul than the particularity, indigency, and penury of that end which it purſues; when it complies moſt of all with this lower world, as is well obſerved by an excellent philoſopher, *The true nobleneſs and freedom of it is then moſt diſputable* *, and the title it holds to true liberty becomes moſt litigious. It never more degenerates from itſelf, than when it becomes enthralled to ſome particular intereſt: as on the other ſide, it never acts more freely or fully, than when it extends itſelf upon the moſt univerſal end †. As low ends debaſe a man's ſpirit, ſupplant and rob it of its birth-right; ſo



* τότε μάλιστα τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἀμφισβητήσιμον ἔχει.

† Every thing is ſo much the more noble, *quò longiores habet fines*, as was well obſerved by *Tully*.

the higheſt and laſt end raiſes and ennobles it, and enlarges it into a more univerſal and comprehenſive capacity of enjoying that one unbounded goodneſs which is God himſelf: it makes it ſpread and dilate itſelf in the infinite ſphere of the Divine Being and bleſſedneſs, it makes it live in the fulneſs of him that fills all in all.

Every thing is moſt properly ſuch as the end is which is aimed at: the mind of man is always ſhaping itſelf into a conformity as much as may be to that which is his end; and the nearer it draws to it in the atchievement thereof, the greater likeneſs it bears to it. There is a plaſtic virtue, a ſecret energy iſſuing forth from that which the mind propounds to itſelf as its end, to mould and faſhion it according to its own model. The ſoul is always ſtamped with the ſame characters that are engraven upon the end at which it aims; and, while it converſes with it, and ſets itſelf before it, *it is turned as clay to the ſeal*, to uſe that phraſe in Job xxxviii. 14. The ſoul of man conceives all its thoughts and imaginations before his end, as *Laban*'s ews did their young before the rods in the watering troughs, Gen. xxx. 38, 39. He that purſues any worldly intereſt or earthly thing as his end, becomes himſelf alſo earthly: and the more the ſoul directs itſelf to God, the more it becomes God-like, deriving a print of that glory and beauty upon itſelf which it converſeth with, as it is excellently ſet forth by the Apoſtle, *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory*, 2 Corin. iii. 18. That ſpirit of ambition and popularity which ſo violently tranſports the minds of men into a purſuit of vain-glory, makes them as vain as that popular air upon which they live: the ſpirit of this world, that draws forth a man's deſigns after worldly intereſts, makes him as unſtable, inconſtant, tumultuous, and perplexed a thing as the world is. On the contrary, the ſpirit of true religion, ſteering and directing the mind and life to God, makes it an uniform, ſtable and quiet thing, as God himſelf is: it is only true goodneſs in the ſoul of man, guiding it ſteadily and uniformly towards God,

directing

directing it and all its actions to the one laſt end and chief good, that can give it a true conſiſtency and compoſedneſs within itſelf.

All ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-love do but impriſon the ſoul, and confine it to its own home: the mind of a good man is too noble, too large, for ſuch a particular life; he hath learned to deſpiſe his own being, in compariſon of that uncreated beauty and goodneſs which ſo infinitely tranſcends himſelf and every other created thing; he reckons upon his choice and beſt affections and deſigns as too choice and precious a treaſure to be ſpent upon ſuch a poor ſorry thing as himſelf, or upon any thing elſe but God himſelf.

This was the life of Chriſt, and is, in ſome degree, the life of every one that partakes of the ſpirit of Chriſt. Such Chriſtians ſeek not their own glory, but the glory of him that ſent them into this world: they know they were brought forth into this world, not to obey the dictates of their own will, but to ſerve the will and pleaſure of him that made them, and to finiſh that work he hath appointed them. It were not worth the while to have been born or to live, had it been only for ſuch a penurious end as ourſelves are: it is moſt God-like, and beſt ſuits with the ſpirit of religion, for a Chriſtian to live wholly to God, to live the life of God, *having his own life hid with Chriſt in God*, Coloſ. iii. 3.; and thus in a ſober ſenſe he becomes deified. This indeed is ſuch a deification as is not tranſacted merely upon the ſtage of fancy by arrogance and preſumption, but in the higheſt powers of the ſoul, by a living and quickning ſpirit of true religion there uniting God and the ſoul together in the unity of affections, will, and end.

I ſhould now paſs from this to another particular; but, becauſe many are apt to miſapprehend the notion of God's glory, and flatter themſelves with their pretended and imaginary aiming at the glory of God, I think it may be of good uſe, a little further and more diſtinctly to unfold the deſign that a religious mind purſues, in directing itſelf and all its actions to God. We are therefore to conſider, that this doth not conſiſt in ſome

ſome tranſient thoughts of God and his glory, as the end we propound to ourſelves in any undertakings: a man does not direct all his actions to the glory of God, by forming a conception in his mind, or ſtirring up a ſtrong imagination upon any action, That that muſt be for the glory of God: it is not the thinking of God's glory that is glorifying of him. As all other parts of religion may be apiſhly acted over by fancy and imagination, ſo alſo may the internal parts of religion many times be acted over with much ſeeming grace, by our fancy and paſſions; theſe often love to be drawing the pictures of religion, and uſe their beſt arts to render them more beautiful and pleaſing. But, tho' true practical religion derives its force and beauty thro' all the lower powers of a man's ſoul, yet it hath not its riſe nor throne there: as religion conſiſts not in a form of words which ſignify nothing, ſo neither doth it conſiſt in a ſet of fancies or internal apprehenſions. Our Saviour hath beſt taught what it is to live to God's glory, or to glorify God, *viz.* To be fruitfull in all holineſs, and to live ſo as that our lives may ſhine, with his grace ſpreading itſelf thro' our whole man *.

We rather glorify God by entertaining the impreſſions of his glory upon us, than by communicating any kind of glory to him. Then does a good man become the tabernacle of God, wherein the divine *Shechinah* does reſt, and which the divine glory fills, when the frame of his mind and life is wholly according to that idea and pattern which he receives from the Mount; as it is ſaid of the material tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 40. We beſt glorify him, when we grow moſt like to him: and we then act moſt for his glory, when a true ſpirit of ſanctity, juſtice, and meekneſs, runs thro' all our actions; when we ſo live in the world as becomes thoſe that converſe with the great Mind and Wiſdom of the whole world, with that Almighty Spirit that made, ſupports, and governs all things, with that Being from whence

* *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* John xv. 8.

whence all good flows, and in whom there is no ſpot, ſtain, or ſhadow of evil; and ſo being captivated and overcome by the ſenſe of the divine lovelineſs and goodneſs, endeavour to be like him, and conform ourſelves as much as may be to him.

When God ſeeks his own glory, he does not ſo much endeavour any thing without himſelf. He did not bring this ſtately fabric of the univerſe into being, that he might for ſuch a monument of his mighty power and beneficence, gain ſome panegyrics or applauſe from a little of that fading breath which he had made. Neither was that gracious contrivance of reſtoring lapſed men to himſelf a purpoſe of getting to himſelf ſome eternal *hallelujahs*, as if he had ſo ardently thirſted after the lays of glorified ſpirits, or deſired a choir of ſouls to ſing forth his praiſes. Neither was it to let the world ſee how magnificent he was. No, it is his own internal glory that he moſt loves, and the communication thereof which he ſeeks: as *Plato* ſometimes ſpeaks of the divine love, it ariſes not out of indigency, as created love does, but out of fulneſs and redundancy; it is an overflowing fountain, and that love which deſcends upon created being is a free efflux from the Almighty ſource of love: and it is well pleaſing to him that thoſe creatures which he hath made ſhould partake of it. Tho' God cannot ſeek his own glory ſo as if he might acquire any addition to himſelf, yet he may ſeek it ſo as to communicate it out of himſelf. It was a good maxim of *Plato* *, which is better ſtated by St. *James*, *God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not*, chap i. 5. And by that glory of his, which he loves to impart to his creatures, I underſtand thoſe impreſſions of wiſdom, juſtice, patience, mercy, love, peace, joy, and other divine gifts which he beſtows freely upon the minds of men. And thus God triumphs in his own glory, and takes pleaſure in the communication of it.

As God's ſeeking his own glory in reſpect of us, is moſt properly the flowing forth of his goodneſs upon us: ſo our ſeeking the glory of God is moſt properly our

* τῷ Θεῷ ἡδὺς φθόνος.

our endeavouring a participation of his goodneſs, and an earneſt inceſſant purſuing after divine perfection. When God becomes ſo great in our eyes, and all created things ſo little, that we reckon upon nothing as worthy of our aims or ambitions, but a ſerious participation of the divine nature, and the exerciſe of divine virtues, love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, kindneſs, goodneſs, and the like; when the ſoul, beholding the infinite beauty and lovelineſs of the Divinity, and then looking down and beholding all created perfection mantled over with darkneſs, is raviſhed into love and admiration of that never-ſetting brightneſs, and endeavours after the greateſt reſemblance of God in juſtice, love, and goodneſs; when converſing with him, by a ſecret feeling * of the virtue, ſweetneſs, and power of his goodneſs, we endeavour to aſſimilate ourſelves to him; then we may be ſaid to glorify him indeed. God ſeeks no glory but his own; and we have none of our own to give him. God, in all things, ſeeks himſelf and his own glory, as finding nothing better than himſelf; and, when we love him above all things, and endeavour to be moſt like him, we declare plainly that we count nothing better than he is.

I doubt we are too nice logicians ſometimes, in diſtinguiſhing between the glory of God and our own ſalvation. We cannot, in a true ſenſe, ſeek our own ſalvation more than the glory of God, which triumphs moſt, and diſcovers itſelf moſt effectually in the ſalvation of ſouls; for indeed this ſalvation is nothing elſe but a true participation of the divine nature. Heaven is not a thing without us, nor is happineſs any thing diſtinct from a true conjunction of the mind with God in a ſecret feeling of his goodneſs and reciprocation of affection to him, wherein the divine glory moſt unfolds itſelf. And there is nothing that a ſoul, touched with any ſerious ſenſe of God, can more earneſtly thirſt after, or ſeek with more ſtrength of affection than this: then ſhall we be happy, when God comes to be all in all in us. To love God above ourſelves, is not indeed ſo properly to love him above the ſalvation of our ſouls, as

* ἐν ἡσύχῳ ἐπαφῇ.

as if these were distinct things; but it is to love him above all our own sinful affections, and above our particular beings, and to conform ourselves to him. And, as that which is * good relatively, and in order to us, is so much the better, by how much the more it is commensurate and conformed to us: so, on the other side, that which is good absolutely and essentially, requires that our minds and affections should, as far as may be, be commensurate and conformed to it: and herein is God most glorified, and we made happy. As we cannot truly love the first and highest good, while we subordinate it to ourselves; so neither is our own salvation consistent with any such sordid and particular love. We cannot be compleatly blessed, till the idea of good, or good itself, which is God, exercise its sovereignty over all the faculties of our souls, rendering them as like to itself as may consist with their proper capacity.

## CHAP. VI.

THE *Fourth* property and effect of true religion, wherein it expresseth its own nobleness, is this, *That it begets the greatest serenity, constancy and composedness of mind, and brings the truest contentment, the most satisfying joy and pleasure, the purest and most divine sweetness and pleasure to the spirits of good men.* Every good man, in whom religion rules, is at peace and unity with himself, is as a city compacted together. Grace doth more and more reduce all the faculties of the soul into a perfect subjection and subordination to itself. The union and conjunction of the soul with God, that primitive unity, is that which is the alone original and fountain of all peace, and the centre of rest: as the further any being withdraws itself from God, the more it

* See the discourse *Of the Existence and Nature of God*, chap. ix.

it breaks into diſcords within itſelf, as not having any centre within itſelf, which might collect and unite all the faculties thereof to itſelf, and ſo knit them up together in a ſweet confederacy amongſt themſelves. God only is ſuch an Almighty Goodneſs as can attract all the powers in man's ſoul to itſelf, as being an object tranſcendently adequate to the largeſt capacities of any created being, and ſo unite man perfectly to himſelf in the true enjoyment of one uniform and ſimple good.

It muſt be one laſt end and ſupreme good that can fix the mind of man, which otherwiſe will be toſſed up and down in perpetual uncertainties, and become as many ſeveral things, as thoſe poor particularities are with which it meets. A wicked man's life is ſo diſtracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects, that it never is, nor can be conſiſtent to itſelf, nor continue in any compoſed and ſettled frame: it is the moſt intricate, irregular, and confuſed thing in the world, no one part of it agreeing with another; becauſe the whole is not firmly united by the power of ſome one laſt end running thro' all. Whereas the life of a good man is under the ſweet command of one ſupreme goodneſs and laſt end. This alone is that living form and ſoul, which, running thro' all the powers of the mind and actions of life, collects all together into one fair and beautiful ſyſtem, making all that variety conſpire into perfect unity; whereas elſe all would fall aſunder like the members of a dead body, when once the ſoul is gone, every little particle ſeparating itſelf from the reſt. It was a good maxim of *Pythagoras*, noted by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *A man ought to become one* *. A divided mind, and a multiform life, ſpeak the greateſt diſparagement that may be: it is only the intermediation of one laſt end that can reconcile a man perfectly to himſelf and his own happineſs. This is the beſt temper and compoſedneſs of the ſoul, when, *by a conjunction with one chief good and laſt end, it is drawn up*

* Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἕνα γενέσθαι.

*up into an unity and consent with itself* *; when all the faculties of the soul with their several issues and motions, though never so many in themselves, like so many lines meet together in one and the same center. It is not one and the same goodness that always actuates the faculties of a wicked man; but as many several images and pictures of goodness as a quick and working fancy can represent to him; which so divide his affections, that he is no one thing within himself, but tossed hither and thither by the most independent principles and imaginations that may be. But a good man hath singled out the supreme goodness, which by an omnipotent sweetness draws all his affections after it, and so makes them all with the greatest complacency conspire together in the pursuit and embraces of it. Were there not some infinite and self-sufficient goodness, and that perfectly one †, man would be a most miserably-distracted creature. As the restless appetite within man after some infinite and sovereign good (without the enjoyment of which it could never be satisfied) does commend unto us the notion of a Deity: so the perpetual distractions and divisions that would arise in the soul upon a plurality of deities, may seem no less to evince the unity of that Deity. Were not this chief good perfectly one, were there any other equal to it; man's soul would hang equally poised, equally desiring the enjoyment of both, but moving to neither. But when religion enters into the soul, it charms all its restless rage and violent appetite, by discovering to it the universal fountain-fulness of one supreme almighty goodness; and leading it out of itself into a conjunction therewith; there it meets with full contentment, and rests adequately satisfied in the fruition of the infinite, uniform and essential goodness and loveliness ‡.



* ὅταν εἰς ἓν καὶ εἰς μίαν ὁμολογίαν ἑνωθῇ, as *Plotinus* speaks.

† ἀρχικὴ μόνας, as *Simplicius* doth phrase it.

‡ The true Αὐτόκαλον, that is not πῇ μὲν καλὸν, πῇ δὲ καλὸν, ἀλλ' ὅλον δὲ ὅλῳ καλὸν, as a noble philosopher doth well express it.

The peace which a religious ſoul is poſſeſſed of is ſuch a peace as paſſeth all underſtanding: the joy that it meets with in the ways of holineſs is unſpeakable and full of glory. The delights and ſweetneſſes that accompany a religious life are of a purer and more excellent nature than the pleaſures of worldly men. The ſpirit of a good man is pure and refined, it can take no pleaſure in the mire of earthly and ſenſual pleaſures, in which carnal men moſt brutally delight themſelves*. It ſpeaks the degeneration of any ſoul whatſoever, that it ſhould deſire to incorporate itſelf with any of the groſs, and ſenſual delights here below. But a ſoul purified by religion from all earthly dreggs, delights to mingle itſelf only with things that are moſt divine and ſpiritual. There is nothing that can beget any pleaſure or ſweetneſs but in ſome harmonical faculty which hath ſome kindred and acquaintance with it. As it is in the ſenſes, ſo in every other faculty there is ſuch a natural kind of ſcience as whereby it can ſingle out its own proper object from every thing elſe, and is better able to define it to itſelf than the exacteſt artiſt in the world can; and when once it hath found it out, it preſently feels itſelf ſo perfectly fitted and matched by it, that it diſſolves into ſecret pleaſure in the entertainment of it. True delight and joy is begotten by the conjunction of ſome diſcerning faculty with its proper object. The proper objects for a mind and ſpirit are divine and immaterial things, with which it hath the greateſt affinity, and therefore triumphs moſt in its converſe with them †; and when it converſeth moſt with theſe high and noble objects, it behaves itſelf moſt gracefully and lives moſt becoming itſelf; and it lives alſo moſt deliciouſly, nor can it any where elſe be better provided for, or indeed fare ſo well. A good man diſdains to be beholden to the wit or art or induſtry of any creature to find him out, and bring him in a conſtant revenue and

* *Non admittit ad volatum accipitrem ſuum in terra pulverulenta*, as the *Arabic* proverb hath it.

† As it is well obſerved by *Seneca*, *Hoc habet argumentum divinitatis ſuæ, quòd illum divina delectant; nec ut alienis interſit, ſed ut ſuis: In præfat. ad l. 1. Nat. Quæſt.*

and maintenance for his joy and pleaſure: the language of his heart is that of the Pſalmiſt, *Lord, liſt thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, Pſalm. iv. 6. Religion always carries a ſufficient proviſion of joy and ſweetneſs along with it to maintain itſelf withal: *All the ways of wiſdom are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. iii. 17. Religion is no ſullen ſtoiciſm or oppreſſing melancholy, it is no enthralling tyranny exerciſed over thoſe noble and lively affections of love and delight, as thoſe men who were never acquainted with the life of it may imagine; but it is full of a vigorous and maſculine delight and joy, and ſuch as advanceth and ennobles the ſoul, and does not weaken or diſpirit the life and power of it, as ſenſual and earthly joys do, when the ſoul, unacquainted with religion, is enforced to give entertainment to theſe groſs and earthly things, for the want of enjoyment of ſome better good. The ſpirit of a good man may juſtly behave itſelf with a noble diſdain to all terrene pleaſures, becauſe it knows where to find joy more exalted; it is the ſame almighty and eternal goodneſs which is the happineſs of God and of all good men. The truly-religious ſoul affects nothing primarily and fundamentally but God himſelf; his contentment even in the midſt of his worldly employments is in the ſun of the divine favour that ſhines upon him: this is as the manna that lies upon the top of all outward bleſſings which his ſpirit gathers up and feeds upon with delight. Religion conſiſts not in a toilſome drudgery about ſome bodily exerciſes and external performances; nor is it only the ſpending of ourſelves in ſuch attendances upon God and ſervices to him as are only accommodated to this life, (though every employment for God is both amiable and honourable:) but there is ſomething of our religion that intereſts us in a preſent poſſeſſion of that joy which is unſpeakable and glorious; which leads us into the porch of heaven, and to the confines of eternity. It ſometimes carries up the ſoul into a mount of transfiguration, or to the top of *Piſgah*, where it may take a proſpect of the promiſed land; and gives it a map or ſcheme of its future inheritance: it gives it ſometimes

ſome anticipations of bleſſedneſs, ſome foretaſtes of thoſe joys, thoſe rivers of pleaſure which run at God's right hand for evermore.

I might further add as explanatory of this preſent argument, the tranquillity and compoſedneſs of a good man's ſpirit in reference to all external moleſtations. Religion having made a thorough pacification of the ſoul within itſelf, renders it impregnable to all outward aſſaults: ſo that it is at reſt and lives ſecurely in the midſt of all thoſe boiſterous ſtorms and tempeſts that make ſuch violent impreſſions upon the ſpirits of wicked men. Here the *Stoics* have ſtated the caſe aright, that all perturbations of the mind ariſe not properly from an outward but an inward cauſe: it is not any outward evil but an inward imagination bred in the ſoul itſelf, that moleſts and grieves it. The more that the ſoul is reſtored to itſelf, and lives at the height of it's own being, the more eaſily may it diſdain and deſpiſe any deſign or combination againſt it by the moſt bluſtering giants in the world. A Chriſtian who enjoys himſelf in God, will not be beholden to the world's fair and gentle uſage for the compoſedneſs of his mind; no, he enjoys that peace and tranquillity within himſelf which no creature can beſtow upon him, or take from him.

But the *Stoics* were not ſo happy in their notions about the way to true reſt and compoſedneſs of ſpirit. It is not (by their leave) the ſouls collecting and gathering up itſelf within the circumference of its own eſſence, nor is it a rigid reſtraining and keeping in its own iſſues and motions within the confines of its own natural endowments, which is able to confer upon it that undiſturbedneſs and compoſedneſs of mind which they ſo much idolize as the ſupreme and only bliſs of man, and render it free from all kind of perturbations: (for by what we find in *Seneca* and others, it appears, that the *Stoics* ſeeking an independent dominion within themſelves, and being loth to be beholden to God for their happineſs, but that each of them might be as God, ſelf-ſufficient and happy in the enjoyment of himſelf,

endeavoured

endeavoured, by their auſtere doctrine, and a rigid diſcipline over their ſouls, their ſeverities againſt paſſions, and all thoſe reſtleſs motions in the ſoul after ſome higher good, to attain a compleat undiſturbedneſs and a full contentment within themſelves.) But herein the true method of finding reſt to themſelves eſcaped them; it is the union of the ſoul with God, that uniform, ſimple, and unbounded good, which is the ſole original of all true inward peace. Neither were it an happineſs worth the having, for a mind, like an hermit, ſequeſtred from all things elſe, by a receſſion into itſelf, to ſpend an eternity in ſelf-converſe, and the enjoyment of ſuch a diminutive ſuperficial nothing as itſelf is, and muſt neceſſarily be to itſelf. It is only peculiar to God to be happy in himſelf alone; and God, who has been more liberal in his proviſions for man, hath created in man ſuch a ſpring of reſtleſs motion, that with the greateſt impatiency forceth him out of himſelf, and violently toſſeth him to and fro, till he come to fix himſelf upon ſome ſolid and ſelf-ſubſiſtent goodneſs. Could a man find himſelf withdrawn from all terrene and material things, and perfectly retired into himſelf; were the whole world ſo quiet and calm about him, as not to offer to make the leaſt attempt upon the compoſedneſs and conſtancy of his mind; might he be ſo well entertained at his own home, as to find no frowns, no ſour looks from his own conſcience; might he have that ſecurity from heaven, that God would not diſquiet his fancied tranquillity, by imbittering his thoughts with any dreadful apprehenſions; yet he ſhould find ſomething within him that would not let him be at reſt, but would rend him from himſelf, and toſs him from his own foundation and conſiſtency. There is an inſatiable appetite in the ſoul of man, like a greedy lion hunting after his prey, that would render him impatient of his own pinching penury, and could never ſatisfy itſelf with ſuch a thin and ſpare diet as he finds at home. There are two principal faculties in the ſoul, which, like the two daughters of the horſe-leech, are always crying, *Give, Give:* theſe are thoſe hungry vultures, which, if they

cannot find their prey abroad, return and gnaw the ſoul itſelf: where the carcaſs is, there will the eagles be gathered together. By this we may ſee how unavailable to the attaining of true reſt and peace that conceit of the *Stoics* was, who ſuppoſed the only way and method hereto was this, To confine the ſoul thus monaſtically to its own home. We read in the goſpel of ſuch a queſtion of our Saviours, *What went you out into the wilderneſs to ſee?* Matth. xi. 7. we may invert it, What do you return within to ſee? A ſoul confined within the private and narrow cell of its own particular being? Such a ſoul deprives itſelf of all that almighty and eſſential glory and goodneſs which ſhines round about it, which ſpreads itſelf thro' the whole univerſe; I ſay it deprives itſelf of all this, for the enjoying of ſuch a poor, petty, and diminutive thing as itſelf is, which yet it can never enjoy truly in ſuch a retiredneſs.

We have ſeen the peaceful and happy ſtate of the truly religious: but it is otherwiſe with wicked and irreligious men. *The wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt; there is no peace to the wicked*, as it is expreſſed by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. lvii. 20, 21. The mind of a wicked man is like the ſea, when it roars and rages thro' the ſtriving of various diſcordant winds upon it. Furious luſts and wild paſſions within, as they war againſt Heaven and the more noble and divine part of the ſoul, ſo they war amongſt themſelves, maintaining perpetual conteſts, and contending which ſhall be the greateſt*: whence it is that the ſoul of a wicked man becomes a very unhabitable and incommodious place to itſelf, full of diſquietneſs and trouble thro' the many conteſts and civil commotions maintained within it. The minds of wicked men are like thoſe diſconſolate and deſolate ſpirits which our Saviour ſpeaks of, Matth. xii. 43. which being caſt out of their habitation, wander up and down thro' dry and deſert places, ſeeking reſt, but finding none. The ſoul that finds not ſome ſolid and

ſelf-

* Theſe indeed are the *Cadmus*-brood riſing out of the ſerpent's teeth, ready armed againſt one another.

ſelf-ſufficient good to centre itſelf upon, is a diſturbed and reſtleſs thing: and, being without God, it wanders up and down the world, deſtitute, afflicted, tormented with vehement hunger and thirſt after ſome ſatisfying good: and, as any one ſhall bring it tidings, *Lo here*, or *Lo there is good*, it preſently goes out towards it, and with a ſwift and ſpeedy flight haſtens after it. The ſenſe of an inward indigency doth ſtimulate and inforce it to ſeek its contentment without itſelf, and ſo it wanders up and down from one creature to another; and thus becomes diſtracted by a multiplicity of objects. And, while it cannot find ſome one and only object upon which, as being perfectly adequate to its capacities, it may wholly beſtow itſelf; while it is toſſed with reſtleſs and vehement motions of deſire and love thro' a world of painted beauties, falſe glozing excellencies; courting all, but matching no where; violently hurried every whither, but finding no where an object befitting its love; while it converſeth only with theſe pinching particularities here below, and is not yet acquainted with the univerſal goodneſs; it is certainly far from true reſt and ſatisfaction, from a fixt compoſed temper of ſpirit: but, being diſtracted by multiplicity of objects and ends, there can never be any firm and ſtable peace or friendſhip at home amongſt all its powers and faculties; nor can there be a firm amity and friendſhip abroad betwixt wicked men themſelves, as *Ariſtotle* in his ethics does conclude, becauſe all vice is ſo multiform and inconſiſtent a thing, and ſo there can be no true concatenation of affections and ends between them. Whereas in all good men, virtue and goodneſs is one form and ſoul to them all, that unites them together, and there is the one, ſimple, and uniform good, that guides and governs them all. They are not as a ſhip toſſed in the tumultuous ocean of this world, without any compaſs at all to ſteer by; but they direct their courſe by the certain guidance of the one laſt End, as the true Pole-ſtar of all their motion. But, while the ſoul lies benighted in a thick ignorance (as it is with wicked men,) and beholds not ſome ſtable and eternal good towards which it may move, tho' it may,

may, by the ſtrength of that principle of activeneſs within itſelf, ſpend itſelf perpetually with ſwift and giddy motions; yet it will be always conteſting with ſecret diſturbances, and cannot act but with many reluctances, as not finding an object equal to the force and ſtrength of its vaſt affections to act upon.

By what hath been ſaid, may appear the vaſt difference between the ways of ſin and of holineſs. Inward diſtractions and diſturbances, *tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul that doth evil: but to every man that worketh good, glory, honour and peace*, Rom. ii. 9. 10. inward compoſedneſs and tranquillity of ſpirit, pure and divine joys, far excelling all ſenſual pleaſures; in a word, true contentment of ſpirit and full ſatisfaction in God, whom the pious ſoul loves above all things, and longs ſtill after a nearer enjoyment of him. I ſhall conclude this particular with what *Plotinus* concludes his book, That the life of holy and divine men is *a life not touched with theſe vaniſhing delights of time, but a flight of the ſoul alone to God alone* *.

## CHAP. VII.

THE *Fifth* property or effect whereby true religion diſcovers its own nobleneſs and excellency, is this, *That it advanceth the ſoul to an holy boldneſs and humble familiarity with God, as alſo to a well grounded hope and comfortable confidence concerning the love of God toward it, and its own ſalvation.* The truly religious ſoul maintains an humble and ſweet familiarity with God; and, with great alacrity of ſpirit, without any conſternation and ſervility of ſpirit, is enabled to look upon the glory and majeſty of the moſt High: but ſin and wickedneſs is pregnant with fearfulneſs and horrour. That trembling and conſternation of mind which poſſeſſes

* βίος ἀνήδονος τῶν τῇδε, φυγὴ μόνα πρὸς μόνον.

poſſeſſes wicked men, is nothing elſe but a child of darkneſs, a goblin begotten in corrupt and irreligious hearts. While men walk in darkneſs, and are of the night, (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,) then it is only that they are vext with thoſe ugly and ghaſtly ſpectres that terrify and torment them. But, when once the day breaks, and true religion opens herſelf upon the ſoul, like the eye-lids of the morning, then all thoſe ſhadows and frightful apparitions flee away. As all light and love and joy deſcend from above from the Father of Lights: ſo all darkneſs and fearfulneſs and deſpair are from below; they ariſe from corrupt and earthly minds, and are like thoſe groſs vapours, ariſing from this earthly globe, that not being able to get up towards heaven, ſpread themſelves about the circumference of that body where they were firſt begotten, infeſting it with darkneſs, and generating into thunder and lightning, clouds and tempeſts. But, the higher a Chriſtian aſcends above this dark dungeon of the body, the more that religion prevails within him, the more then ſhall he find himſelf as it were in a clear heaven, in a region that is calm and ſerene; and the more will thoſe black and dark affections of fear and deſpair, vaniſh away, and thoſe clear and bright affections of love and joy and hope, break forth in their ſtrength and luſtre.

The devil, who is the prince of darkneſs and the great tyrant, delights to be ſerved with ghaſtly affections and the moſt diſmal deportments of trembling and aſtoniſhment; as having nothing at all of amiableneſs or excellency in him to commend himſelf to his worſhippers. Slavery and ſervility is the badge and livery of the devil's religion *: hence thoſe *terrifying myſteries* of the heathens, performed with much trembling and horror†. But God, who is the ſupreme goodneſs, and eſſential both love and lovelineſs, takes moſt pleaſure in thoſe ſweet and delightful affections of the ſoul, *viz.* love, joy, and hope, which are moſt correſpondent to his own nature.

* γλαυκίσκομον τῆς ψυχῆς, as *Longinus* truly calls it.

† The words for *falſe gods and idols*, עצבים and אימים import *trouble* and *terrour*, and frightful paſſions in their worſhippers.

ture. The antient ſuperſtition of the heathens was always very nice and curious in honouring every one of their gods with ſacrifices and rites moſt agreeable to their natures: I am ſure there is no incenſe, no offering which we can preſent to God, ſo ſweet, ſo acceptable to him, as our love and delight and confidence in him; and, when he comes into the ſouls of men, he makes theſe his throne, as finding the greateſt agreeableneſs therein to his own eſſence. A good man, that finds himſelf made partaker of the divine nature, and transformed into the image of God, infinitely takes pleaſure in God, as being *altogether lovely*, and his *meditation of God is ſweet unto him*, Pſalm civ. 34. St. *John* hath given us the fulleſt deſcription that he could make of him, when he tells us that *God is love*, and he that dwells in God dwells in love; and repoſing himſelf in the boſom of an Almighty Goodneſs, where he finds nothing but love and lovelineſs, he now diſplays all the ſtrength and beauty of thoſe his choiceſt and moſt precious affections of love, and joy, and confidence; his ſoul is now at eaſe, and reſts in peace, neither is there any thing to make afraid: he has got beyond all thoſe powers of darkneſs which give ſuch continual alarms in this lower world, and are always troubling the earth; he is got above all fears and deſpairs; he is in a bright clear region, above clouds and tempeſts. There is no frightful terribleneſs in the Supreme Majeſty. That we apprehend God at any time in ſuch a diſmayed manner, it muſt not at all be made an argument of his nature, but of our ſinfulneſs and weakneſs. The ſun in the heavens always was and will be a globe of light and brightneſs, altho' the weak eye may be rather dazzled than enlightned by it. There is an inward ſenſe in man's ſoul, which, were it once awakened and excited with an inward taſte and reliſh of the Divinity, could better define God to him than all the world elſe. It is the ſincere Chriſtian that ſo taſtes and ſees how good and ſweet the Lord is, as none elſe does: *The God of hope fills him with all joy and peace in believing*, ſo that he *abounds in hope*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Rom. xv. 13. He quietly repoſes himſelf in God; *his heart is fixed, truſting*

*truſting in the Lord,* Pſalm cxii. 7.; he is more for a ſolid peace and ſettled calm of ſpirit, than for high raptures and feelings of joy, or extraordinary manifeſtations of God to him: he does not paſſionately deſire, nor importunately expect ſuch things; he rather looks after the manifeſtations of the goodneſs and power of God within him, in ſubduing all in his ſoul that is unlike and contrary to God, and forming him into his image and likeneſs.

Tho' I think it worthy of a Chriſtian to endeavour the aſſurance of his own ſalvation; yet perhaps it might be the ſafeſt way to moderate his curioſity of prying into God's book of life, and to ſtay a while until he ſees himſelf within the confines of ſalvation itſelf. Should a man hear a voice from heaven, or ſee a viſion from the Almighty, to teſtify unto him the love of God towards him; yet methinks it were more deſireable to find a revelation of all from within, ariſing up from the centre of a man's own ſoul, in the real and internal impreſſions of a God-like nature upon his own ſpirit; and thus to find the foundation and beginning of heaven and happineſs within himſelf: it were more deſirable to ſee the crucifying of our own will, the mortifying of the mere animal life, and to ſee a divine life riſing up in the room of it, as a ſure pledge and commencement of immortality and happineſs, the very eſſence of which conſiſts in a perfect conformity and chearful compliance of all the powers of our ſouls with the will of God.

The beſt way of gaining a well-grounded aſſurance of the divine love, is this, for a man to overcome himſelf and his own will: *To him that overcomes ſhall be given that white ſtone, and in it the new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receives it,* Rev. ii. 17. He that beholds the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſing upon the horizon of his ſoul with healing in its wings, and diſpelling all that miſty darkneſs of his own ſelf-will and paſſions; ſuch a one deſires not now the ſtar-light to know whether it be day or not, nor cares he to pry into Heaven's ſecrets, and to ſearch into the hidden rolls of eternity, there to ſee the whole ſcheme of his ſalvation;

ſalvation; for he views it tranſacted upon the inward ſtage of his own ſoul, and, reflecting upon himſelf, he may behold a heaven opened from within, and a throne ſet up in his ſoul, and an Almighty Saviour ſitting upon it, and reigning within him: he now finds the kingdom of heaven within him, and ſees that it is not a thing merely reſerved for him without him, being already made partaker of the ſweetneſs and efficacy of it. What the *Jews* ſay of the ſpirit of prophecy, may not unfitly be applied to the Holy Ghoſt, the true Comforter, dwelling in the minds of good men as a ſure earneſt of their eternal inheritance, *The Spirit reſides not but upon a man of fortitude* *, one who gives proof of this fortitude in ſubduing his own ſelf-will and his affections. We read of *Eliſha*, that he was fain to call for a muſical inſtrument and one to play before him, to allay the heat of his paſſions, before he could converſe with the prophetical Spirit. The Holy Spirit is too pure and gentle a thing to dwell in a mind muddied and diſturbed by thoſe impure dregs, thoſe thick fogs and miſts that ariſe from our ſelf-will and paſſions; our prevailing over theſe is the beſt way to cheriſh the Holy Spirit, by which we may be ſealed unto the day of redemption.

To conclude this particular: It is a venturous and wild conceit which ſome men have, That, in a perfect reſignation of our wills to the divine will, a man ſhould be content with his own damnation, and to be the ſubject of eternal wrath in hell, if it ſhould ſo pleaſe God: which is as impoſſible as it is for him, that infinitely thirſts after a true participation of the divine nature, and moſt earneſtly endeavours a moſt inward union with God in ſpirit, by a denial of himſelf and his own will, to ſwell up in ſelf-love, pride, and arrogancy againſt God; the one whereof is the moſt ſubſtantial heaven, the other the moſt real hell: whereas indeed, by conquering ourſelves, we are tranſlated from death to life, and the kingdom of God and heaven is already come into us.

CHAP.

אין נבואה שורה אלא על גבור׃

## CHAP. VIII.

THE *Sixth* property or effect wherein religion diſcovers its own excellency, is this, *That it ſpiritualizes material things, and ſo carries up the ſouls of good men from earthly things to things divine, from this ſenſible world to the intellectual.*

God made the univerſe, and all the creatures contained therein, as ſo many glaſſes, wherein he might reflect his own glory: he hath copied forth himſelf in the creation; and, in this outward world, we may read the lovely characters of the divine goodneſs, power, and wiſdom. In ſome creatures there are darker repreſentations of God, there are the prints and footſteps of God; but in others there are clearer and fuller repreſentations of the Divinity, the face and image of God*. But how to find God here, and feelingly to converſe with him, and, being affected with the ſenſe of the divine glory ſhining out upon the creation, how to paſs out of the ſenſible world into the intellectual, is not ſo effectually taught by that philoſophy which profeſſeth it moſt, as by true religion: that which unites God and the ſoul together, can beſt teach it how to aſcend and deſcend upon thoſe golden links that unite, as it were, the world to God. That divine wiſdom, which contrived and beautified this glorious ſtructure, can beſt explain her own art, and carry up the ſoul back again, in theſe reflected beams, to him who is the fountain of them. Tho' good men are not all acquainted with thoſe philoſophical notions, touching the relation between created and the uncreated Being; yet may they eaſily find every creature pointing out to that Being whoſe image and ſuperſcription it bears, and climb up † from thoſe darker reſemblances of the divine wiſ-



* According to that known ſaying of the ſchoolmen, *Remotiores ſimilitudines creaturæ ad Deum dicuntur veſtigium, propinquiores verò imago.*

† ὥσπερ ἀναβάθμοις τισὶ, as the antients ſpeak.

dom and goodneſs ſhining out in different degrees upon ſeveral creatures, till they ſweetly repoſe themſelves in the boſom of the Divinity: and, while they are thus converſing with this lower world, and are viewing *the inviſible things of God in the things that are made*, Rom. i. 20. in this viſible and outward creation, they find God many times ſecretly flowing into their ſouls, and leading them ſilently out of the court of the temple into the holy place. But it is otherwiſe with wicked men; they dwell perpetually upon the dark ſide of the creatures, and converſe with theſe things only in a groſs, ſenſual, earthly, and unſpiritual manner; they are ſo encompaſſed with the thick and foggy miſt of their own corruptions, that they cannot ſee God there where he is moſt viſible: *the light ſhineth in darkneſs, but darkneſs comprehends it not*; John i. 5.: their ſouls are ſo deeply ſunk into that houſe of clay which they carry about with them, that, were there nothing of body or bulky matter before them, they could find nothing wherein to exerciſe themſelves.

But religion, where it is in truth and in power, renews the very ſpirit of our minds, and doth in a manner ſpiritualize this outward creation to us, and doth, in a more excellent way, perform that which the *Peripatetics* are wont to affirm of their *active intellect*, in purging bodily and material things from the dregs of matter, and ſeparating them from thoſe circumſtantiating and ſtreightning conditions of time and place, and the like; and teaches the ſoul to look at thoſe perfections which it finds here below, not ſo much as the perfections of this or that body, as they adorn this or that particular being, but as they are ſo many rays iſſuing forth from that firſt and eſſential perfection, in which they all meet and embrace one another in the moſt cloſe friendſhip. Every particular good is a bloſſom of the firſt goodneſs; every created excellency is a beam deſcending from the Father of Lights: and, ſhould we ſeparate all theſe particularities from God, all affection ſpent upon them would be unchaſt, and their embraces adulterous. We ſhould love all things in God, and God in all things, becauſe he is All in All,

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the beginning and original of being, the perfect idea of their goodneſs, and the end of their motion. It is nothing but a thick miſt of pride and ſelf-love which hinders men's eyes from beholding that ſun which both enlightens them and all things elſe: but, when true religion begins once to dawn upon men's ſouls, and with its ſhining light chaſes away their black night of ignorance; then they behold themſelves and all things elſe enlightned (tho' in a different way) by one and the ſame ſun, and all the powers of their ſouls fall down before God, and aſcribe all glory to him. Now it is that a good man is no more ſolicitous whether this or that good thing be his, or whether his perfections exceed the meaſure of this or that particular creature; for whatſoever good he beholds any where, he enjoys and delights in it as much as if it were his own, and, whatever he beholds in himſelf, he looks not upon it as his property, but as a common good; for all theſe beams come from one and the ſame fountain and ocean of light, in whom he loves them all with an univerſal love: when his affections run along the ſtream of any created excellencies, whether his own or of any one's elſe, yet they ſtay not here, but run on till they fall into the ocean; they do not ſettle into a fond love and admiration either of himſelf or any other's excellencies, but he owns them as ſo many pure effluxes and emanations from God, and in a particular being loves the univerſal goodneſs.

Thus may a good man walk up and down the world as in a garden of ſpices, and draw a divine ſweetneſs out of every flower. There is a twofold meaning in every creature, as the *Jews* ſpeak of their law, a literal, and a myſtical, and the one is but the ground of the other: and, as they ſay of divers pieces of their law, ſo a good man ſays of every thing that his ſenſes offer to him, *It ſpeaks to his lower part, but it points out ſomething above to his mind and ſpirit* *. 'Tis the drowſy and muddy ſpirit of ſuperſtition, which being lulled aſleep in the lap



* דבר למטה רמז למעלה

of worldly delights, is fain to ſet ſome idol at its elbow, ſomething that may rouſe it, and put it in mind of God. Whereas true religion never finds itſelf out of the infinite ſphere of the Divinity, and where-ever it finds beauty, harmony, goodneſs, love, ingenuity, wiſdom, holineſs, juſtice, and the like, it is ready to ſay, here, and there is God: whereſoever any ſuch perfections ſhine out, an holy mind climbs up by theſe ſun-beams, and raiſes up itſelf to God.

And, ſeeing God hath never thrown the world from himſelf, but runs thro' all created eſſence, containing the archetypal ideas of all things in himſelf, and from thence imparting ſeveral prints of beauty and excellency all the world over; a ſoul that is truly God-like, a mind that is enlightened from the ſame fountain, and hath its inward ſenſes affected with the ſweet reliſhes of divine goodneſs, cannot but every where behold itſelf in the midſt of that glorious unbounded Being who is indiviſibly every where. A good man finds every place he treads upon holy ground; to him the world is God's temple; he is ready to ſay with *Jacob*, *How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the houſe of God*, Gen. xxviii. 17.

To conclude; It was a degenerous and unworthy ſpirit in that philoſophy which firſt ſeparated and made ſuch diſtances between metaphyſical truths, and the truths of nature; whereas the firſt and moſt antient wiſdom amongſt the heathens was indeed a philoſophical divinity, or a divine philoſophy, which continued for divers ages; but, as men grew worſe, they began to loath it, which made the truly wiſe *Socrates* complain of the ſophiſters of that age which began then to corrupt and debaſe it; whereas heretofore the ſpirit of philoſophy was more generous and divine, and did more purify and ennoble the ſouls of men commending intellectual things to them, and calling them off from ſenſible and material things here below, and ſtill exciting them to endeavour after the neareſt reſemblance of God the ſupreme goodneſs and lovelineſs, and an intimate conjunction with him; which, according to the

the ſtrain of that philoſophy, was the true happineſs of immortal ſouls.

## CHAP. IX.

THE *ſeventh* and laſt property or effect wherein true religion expreſſeth its own nobleneſs and excellency, is this, *That it raiſeth the minds of good men to a due obſervance of and attendance upon divine providence, and enables them to ſerve the will of God, and to acquieſce in it.* Whereſoever God hath a tongue to ſpeak, there they have ears to hear; and being attentive to God in the ſoft and ſtill motions of providence, they are ready to obey his call, and to ſay with *Iſaiah, behold, here am I, ſend me.* Iſaiah. vi. 8. They endeavour to copy forth that leſſon which Chriſt hath ſet Chriſtians, ſeriouſly conſidering how that they came into this world by God's appointment, not to do their own wills, but the will of him that ſent them.

As this conſideration quiets the ſpirit of a good man, who is no idle ſpectator of providence, and keeps him in a calm and ſober temper in the midſt of all ſtorms and tempeſts; ſo it makes him moſt freely to engage himſelf in the ſervice of providence, without any inward reluctancy or diſturbance. He cannot be content that providence ſhould ſerve itſelf of him as it doth even of thoſe things that underſtand it leaſt; but it is his holy ambition to ſerve it. 'Tis nothing elſe but helliſh pride and ſelf-love that makes men ſerve themſelves, and ſo ſet up themſelves as idols againſt God: but it is indeed an argument of true nobleneſs of ſpirit for a man to view himſelf not in the narrow point of his own being, but in the unbounded eſſence of the firſt cauſe, ſo as to *belong wholly to the beſt of beings**, and



* ὅλως τῷ κρείττονος.

and to live only as an inſtrument in the hands of God who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will. *That I were to God, as mine own hand is to me* *, was the expreſſion of an holy ſoul.

To a good man to ſerve the will of God, is in the trueſt and beſt ſenſe to ſerve himſelf, who knows himſelf to be nothing without or in oppoſition to God; *the leſs that a man arrogates to himſelf, the more noble, illuſtrious and divine does he become* †. This is the moſt divine life that can be, for a man to act in the world upon eternal deſigns, and to be ſo wholly devoted to the will of God, as to ſerve it moſt faithfully and entirely. This indeed beſtows a kind of immortality upon theſe ſitting and tranſient acts of ours, which in themſelves are but the offſpring of a moment. A pillar or verſe is a poor ſorry monument of any exploit, which yet may well enough become the higheſt of the world's bravery. But good men, while they cooperate with God, and endeavour to bring themſelves and all their actions to a unity with God, his ends and deſigns, enroll themſelves in eternity. This is the proper character of holy ſouls; their wills are ſo fully reſolved into the divine will, that they in all things ſubſcribe to it without any murmurings or debates: they reſt well ſatisfied with, and take complacency in, any paſſages of divine diſpenſation, *as being ordered and diſpoſed by a mind and wiſdom above, according to the higheſt rules of goodneſs* ‡.

The beſt way for a man rightly to enjoy himſelf, is to maintain an univerſal, ready and chearful compliance with the divine and uncreated will in all things; as knowing that nothing can iſſue and flow forth from the fountain of goodneſs but that which is good: and therefore a good man is never offended with any piece of divine diſpenſation, nor hath he any reluctancy againſt that will which dictates and determines all things by an eternal rule of goodneſs; as knowing,

* *Optarem id me eſſe Deo quod eſt mihi manus mea.*

† *Quò minùs quid ſibi arrogat homo, eò evadit nobilior, clarior, divinior.*

‡ ὡς ὑπὸ τῆς ἀρίστης γνώμης ἐπιτελυμένοις, Epictet. cap. 38.

knowing, that there is an unbounded and almighty love, that without any diſdain or envy freely communicates itſelf to every thing he made; that feeds even the young ravens that call upon him; that makes his ſun to ſhine, and his rain to fall, both upon the juſt and unjuſt; that always enfolds thoſe in his everlaſting arms who are made partakers of his own image, perpetually nouriſhing and cheriſhing them with the freſh and vital influences of his grace; as knowing alſo, that there is an all-ſeeing eye, an unbounded mind and underſtanding, that extends itſelf through the whole univerſe, and ſitting in all the wheels of motion, guides them all, and powerfully governs the moſt excentrical motions of creatures, and carries them all moſt harmoniouſly in their ſeveral orbs to one laſt end. Who then ſhall give law to God? *Where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world?* 1 Cor. i. 20. Where is he that would climb up into *the houſe of judgment, the ſecurity on high**, the great conſiſtory in heaven, and ſitting in conſultation with the Almighty, inſtruct the infinite and incomprehenſible wiſdom? ſhall vain man be wiſer than his Maker? This is the helliſh temper of wicked men, they examine and judge of all things by the line and meaſure of their own ſelf-will, their own opinions and deſigns; and meaſuring all things by a crooked rule, they think nothing to be ſtraight; and therefore they blame the Deity, and with reſtleſs impatience fret and vex themſelves: and this fretfulneſs and impatiency in wicked men argues a breach in the juſt and due conſtitution of their minds and ſpirits.

But a good man, whoſe ſoul is reſtored to its proper frame and conſtitution, has better apprehenſions of the ways and works of God, and is better affected under the various diſpoſals of providence. Indeed to a ſuperficial obſerver of divine providence many things there are, that ſeem to be nothing elſe but digreſſions from the main end of all, and to come to paſs by a fortuitous concourſe of circumſtances; that come in ſo abruptly

* בית דין של המעלה

abruptly and without any dependance one upon another, as if they were without any mind or underſtanding to guide them. But a wiſe man who looks from the beginning to the end of things, beholds them all in their due place and method acting that part which the ſupreme mind and wiſdom that governs all things hath appointed them, and to carry on one and the ſame eternal deſign, while they move according to their own proper inclinations and meaſures, and aim at their own particular ends. Vain and miſerable were it to live in a world *devoid of God and providence* *, as it was well obſerved by the *Stoic*: and to be ſubſervient unto providence is the holy ambition and great endeavour of a good man, who is ſo perfectly overpowered with the love of the univerſal and infinite goodneſs, that he would not ſerve any particular good whatſoever, no not himſelf, as the men of this world do who are *lovers of their own ſelves, and lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God.* 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4.

## CHAP. X.

WE have conſidered the excellency of true religion 1. In regard of its *deſcent and original*; 2. In regard of its *nature*; 3. In regard of its *properties and effects*. We proceed now to a fourth particular, and ſhall ſhew.

4. *That religion is a generous and noble thing in regard of its progreſs*; it is perpetually carrying on that mind in which it is once ſeated toward perfection. Though the firſt appearance of it upon the ſouls of good men may be but as the wings of the morning ſpreading themſelves upon the mountains, yet it is ſtill riſing higher and higher upon them, chaſing away all the filthy miſts and

* κενῷ Θεῷ ἢ προνοίᾳ.

and vapours of ſin and wickedneſs before it, till it arrives to its meridian altitude. *The path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18. There is the ſtrength and force of the Divinity in it; and though when it firſt enters into the minds of men, it may ſeem to be ſown in weakneſs, yet it will raiſe itſelf in power. As Chriſt was in his bodily appearance, he was ſtill increaſing in wiſdom and knowledge and favour with God and man, untill he was perfected in glory: ſo is he alſo in his ſpiritual appearance in the ſouls of men; and accordingly the New Teſtament does more than once diſtinguiſh of Chriſt in his ſeveral ages, and degrees of growth in the ſouls of all true Chriſtians. Good men are always *walking on from ſtrength to ſtrength, till at laſt they ſee God in Zion.* Religion though it hath its infancy, yet it hath no old age: while it is in its minority, it is always in motion; but when it comes to its maturity, and full age, it will always be at reſt, it is then *always the ſame, and its years fail not, but it ſhall endure for ever.* Holy and religious ſouls being once touched with an inward ſenſe of divine beauty and goodneſs, by a ſtrong impreſſion on them are moved ſwiftly after God, and (as the Apoſtle expreſſes himſelf) *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, they preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*; that ſo they may *attain to the reſurrection of the dead.* Phil. iii. 13. 14.

Where a ſpirit of religion is, there is the central force of heaven itſelf quickening and enlivening thoſe that are informed by it in their motions toward heaven. As on the other ſide all unhallowed and defiled minds are within the attractive power of hell, and are continually haſtening their courſe thither, being ſtrongly preſſed down by the weight of their wickedneſs. *Every nature in this world hath ſome proper centre to which it is always haſtening* *. Sin and wickedneſs does not hover

* Ἀεί τινας ἔχει κινήσεις ἡ φύσις, as *Plutarch* hath well obſerved.

hover a little over the bottomleſs pit of hell, and only flutter about it; but are continually ſinking lower and lower into it. Neither does true grace make ſome feeble eſſays toward heaven, but by a mighty energy within itſelf is always ſoaring up higher and higher into heaven. A good chriſtian does not only court his happineſs, and caſt now and then a ſmile upon it, or ſatisfy himſelf merely to be contracted to it; but with the greateſt ardours of love and deſire he purſues the ſolemnity of the juſt nuptials, that he may be wedded to it and made one with it. It is not an airy ſpeculation of heaven as a thing (though never ſo undoubtedly) to come, that can ſatisfy his hungry deſires, but the real poſſeſſion of it even in this life. So we read John vi. 54. *hath eternal life*; and 1 Ep. John v. 11, 13. Such an happineſs would be leſs in the eſteem of good men, that were only good to be enjoyed at the end of this life when all other enjoyments fail them.

I wiſh there be not among ſome, ſuch a light and poor eſteem of heaven, as makes them more to ſeek after aſſurance of heaven only in the idea of it as a thing to come, than after heaven itſelf; of which indeed we can never well be aſſured, untill we find it riſing up within ourſelves and glorifying our own ſouls. When true aſſurance comes, heaven itſelf will appear upon the horizon of our ſouls, like a morning light chaſing away all our dark and gloomy doubtings before it. We ſhall not need then to light up our candles to ſeek for it in corners; no, it will diſplay its own luſtre and brightneſs ſo before us, that we may ſee it in its own light, and ourſelves the true poſſeſſors of it. We may be too nice and vain in ſeeking for ſigns and tokens of Chriſt's ſpiritual appearances in the ſouls of men, as well as the Scribes and Phariſees were in ſeeking for them at his firſt appearance in the world. When he comes into us, let us expect till the works that he ſhall do within us may teſtify of him; and be not over credulous, till we find that he doth thoſe works there which none other could do. As for a true well-ground-

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ed aſſurance, ſay not ſo much, Who ſhall aſcend up into heaven, to fetch it down from thence? or who ſhall deſcend into the deep, to fetch it from beneath? for, in the growth of true internal goodneſs and in the progreſs of true religion, it will freely unfold itſelf within us. Stay till the grain of muſtard-ſeed itſelf breaks forth from among the clods that buried it, till thro' the deſcent of the heavenly dew it ſprouts up and diſcovers itſelf openly. This holy aſſurance is indeed the budding and bloſſoming of felicity in our own ſouls; it is the inward ſenſe and feeling of the true life, ſpirit, ſweetneſs, and beauty of grace powerfully expreſſing its own energy within us.

Briefly, true religion, in the progreſs of it, transforms thoſe minds in which it reigns from glory to glory: it goes on and proſpers in bringing all enemies in ſubjection under their feet, in reconciling the minds of men fully to God, and it inſtates them in a firm poſſeſſion of the ſupreme good. This is the ſeed of God within holy ſouls, which is always warring againſt the ſeed of the ſerpent, till it prevail over it, thro' the divine ſtrength and influence. Tho' hell may open her mouth wide and without meaſure, yet a true Chriſtian, in whom the ſeed of God remaineth, is in a good and ſafe condition; he finds himſelf born up by an almighty arm, and carried upwards as upon eagles wings; and the evil one hath no power over him, or, as St. *John* expreſſeth it, *the evil one toucheth him not*, 1 John v. 18.

## CHAP. XI.

WE come now to the *Fifth* and laſt particular, *viz. The excellency of religion in the term and end of it, which is nothing elſe but bleſſedneſs itſelf in its full maturity.* Which yet I may not here undertake to explain, for it is altogether inexpreſſible, nor can it deſcend ſo low as to accommodate itſelf to any human ſtyle.

ſtyle. Accordingly, St. *John* tells us, *it does not yet appear what we ſhall be*; and yet, that he may give us ſome glimpſe of it, he points us out to God, and tells us, *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2. Indeed the beſt way to get a diſcovery of it, is, to endeavour as much as may be to be God-like, to live in a feeling converſe with God, and in a powerful exerciſe and expreſſion of all God-like diſpoſitions: ſo ſhall our inner man be beſt enabled *to know the breadth and length, the depth and height of that love and goodneſs which* yet *paſſeth all knowledge*, Rom. xi. 33. Epheſ. iii. 29. There is a ſtate of perfection in the life to come ſo far exceeding any in this life, as that we are not able from hence to take the juſt proportions of it, or to form a full and comprehenſive notion of it. We are unable to comprehend the vaſtneſs and fullneſs of that happineſs to which the moſt purified ſouls may be raiſed, or to apprehend how far the mighty power and ſtrength of the Divinity, deriving itſelf into created being, may communicate a more tranſcendent life and bleſſedneſs to it. We know not what latent powers our ſouls may here contain within themſelves, which then may begin to open and dilate themſelves, and to let in the full ſtreams of the divine goodneſs, when they come nearly and intimately to converſe with it; or how bleſſedneſs may act upon thoſe faculties of our minds which we now have. We know not what illapſes and irradiations there may be from God upon ſouls in glory, which may raiſe them into a ſtate of perfection ſurpaſſing all our imaginations.

As for corporeal happineſs, there cannot be any thing further added to the pleaſure of our bodies or animal part, than a reſtoring it from diſturbing paſſion and pain, to its juſt and natural conſtitution; and therefore ſome philoſophers have well diſputed againſt the opinion of the *Epicureans* who make happineſs to conſiſt in bodily pleaſure, *That moſt commonly it has pain for its forerunner* *; and, when the moleſtation is gone, and the juſt conſtitution of nature recovered, pleaſure ceaſeth. But

* ὅτι πολλαπλάσιον ἔχει τὸ λυπηρὸν προηγούμενον.

But the higheſt pleaſure of minds and ſpirits does not only conſiſt in the relieving of them from any antecedent pains or grief, or in a relaxation from ſome former moleſting paſſion: neither is their happineſs a mere ſtoical indiſturbance, as the happineſs of the Deity is not a mere negative thing, rendering it free from all diſturbance or moleſtation, ſo that it may eternally reſt quiet within itſelf; it does not ſo much conſiſt in reſt as in action. A mind and ſpirit is too full of activity and energy, is too quick and potent a thing to enjoy a full and compleat happineſs in a mere ceſſation; this were to make happineſs an heavy ſpiritleſs thing. The philoſopher hath well obſerved, That *with true good, true joy is inſeparably connected** ; there is infinite power and ſtrength in divine joy, pleaſure and happineſs commenſurate to that Almighty Being and Goodneſs which is the eternal ſource of it.

As created beings, that are capable of converſing with God, ſtand nearer to God or further off from him, and as they partake more or leſs of his likeneſs, ſo they partake more or leſs of that happineſs which flows forth from him, and God communicates himſelf in different degrees to them. There may be as many degrees of ſanctity and perfection, as there are of ſtates and conditions of creatures: and that is properly ſanctity which guides and orders all the faculties and actions of any creature, in a way ſuitable and correſpondent to that rank and ſtate in which God hath placed it: and, while it doth ſo, it admits no ſin or defilement to itſelf, tho' yet it may be elevated and advanced higher; and accordingly, true poſitive ſanctity comes to be advanced higher and higher, as any creature comes more to partake of the life of God, and to be brought into a nearer conjunction with God: and ſo the ſanctity and happineſs of innocency itſelf might have been perfected.

Thus we ſee how true religion carries up the ſouls of good men above the black regions of hell and death. This indeed is the great *reſtoration* † of ſouls, it is reli-



* τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἀγαθῷ σύνεστιν ἡ ἀληθινὴ ἡδονή.
† ἀποκατάστασις.

gion itſelf, or a real participation of God and his holineſs, which is their true reſtitution and advancement. All that happineſs of which good men ſhall be made partakers, as it cannot be born up upon any other foundation than true goodneſs and a Godlike nature within them; ſo neither is it diſtinct from it. Sin and hell are ſo twined and twiſted up together, that, if the power of ſin be once diſſolved, the bonds of death and hell will alſo fall aſunder. Sin and hell are of the ſame kind, of the ſame lineage and deſcent: as on the other ſide, true holineſs or religion, and true happineſs, are but two ſeveral notions of one thing, rather than diſtinct in themſelves. Religion delivers us from hell, by inſtating us in a poſſeſſion of true life and bliſs. Hell is rather a nature than a place: and heaven cannot be ſo truly defined by any thing without us, as by ſomething that is within us.

Thus have we done with thoſe particulars, wherein we conſidered the excellency and nobleneſs of religion, which is here expreſſed by *the way of life*, and elſewhere is ſtiled by *Solomon*, *A tree of life* *: true religion being an inward principle of life, of a divine life, the beſt life, that which is life moſt properly ſo called: accordingly, in the holy Scripture, a life of religion is ſtyled *life*, as a life of ſin and wickedneſs is ſtyled *death*. In the antient academical philoſophy it was much diſputed, whether that corporeal and animal life, which was always drawing down the ſoul into terrene and material things, was not more properly to be ſtiled *death* than *life*. What ſenſe hereof the *Pythagoreans* had, may appear by this practiſe of theirs; They were wont to ſet up empty coffins in the places of thoſe who had forſaken their ſchool, and degenerated from their philoſophy and good precepts, as being apoſtates from life itſelf, and dead to virtue and a good life (which is the true life,) and therefore fit only to be reckoned among the dead.

For a concluſion of this diſcourſe; the uſe which we ſhall make of all ſhall be this, To awaken and exhort every one to a ſerious minding of religion: as *Solomon* doth

* עץ חיים ארך חיים

doth earneſtly exhort every one to ſeek after true wiſdom, which is the ſame with religion and holineſs, as ſin is with folly; *Get wiſdom, get underſtanding*, Prov. iv. 5.; and ver. 7. *Get wiſdom, and with all thy getting get underſtanding. Wiſdom is the principal thing.* This is the ſum of all, the concluſion of the whole matter, *Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole* (duty, buſineſs and concernment) *of man*, Eccleſ. xii. 13. Let us not trifle away our time and opportunities which God hath given us, wherein we may lay hold upon life and immortality, in doing nothing, or elſe in purſuing hell and death. Let us awake out of our vain dreams; wiſdom calls upon us, and offers us the hidden treaſures of life and bleſſedneſs: let us not perpetually deliver over ourſelves to lazineſs and ſlumbering. Say not, *There is a lion in the way*; ſay not, Tho' religion be good, yet it is unattainable: No, but let us intend all our powers in a ſerious reſolved purſuance of it, and depend upon the aſſiſtance of Heaven, which never fails thoſe who ſoberly ſeek for it. It is indeed the levity of men's ſpirits, their heedleſſneſs and regardleſſneſs of their own lives, that betrays them to ſin and death. It is the general practice of men *to live without premeditation* *; they ordinarily ponderate and deliberate upon every thing more than how its becomes them to live, they ſo live as if their bodies had ſwallowed up their ſouls; their lives are but a kind of lottery: the principles by which they are guided are nothing elſe but a confuſed multitude of fancies rudely huddled together. Such is the life of moſt men, it is but a mere caſual thing acted over at peradventure, without any fair and calm debates held either with religion, or with reaſon, which, in itſelf, as it is not diſtorted and depraved by corrupt men, is a true friend to religion, and directs men to God, and to things good and juſt, pure, lovely, and praiſe-worthy; and the directions of this inward guide we are not to neglect. Unreaſonableneſs, or the ſmothering and extinguiſhing the candle of the Lord within us, is no



* αὐτοσχεδιάζειν τὸν βίον, *ex tempore vivere*, as the Satyriſt ſpeaks.

piece of religion, nor advantageous to it: that certainly will not raiſe men up to God, which ſinks them below men. There had never been ſuch an apoſtacy from religion, nor had ſuch a myſtery of iniquity (full of deceiveableneſs and impoſture) been revealed and wrought ſo powerfully in the ſouls of ſome men, had there not firſt come an apoſtacy from ſober reaſon, had there not firſt been a falling away and departure from natural truth.

It is to be feared our nice ſpeculations about *ſomething without us** in theology, have tended more to exerciſe men's wits than to reform their lives, and that they have too much deſcended into their practice, and have tended rather to take men off from minding religion, than to quicken them up to a diligent ſeeking after it. Tho' the powers of nature may now be weakened, and tho' we cannot produce a living form of religion in our own ſouls; yet we are not ſurely ſo reſolved into a ſluggiſh paſſiveneſs, as that we cannot, or were not in any manner to ſeek after it. Certainly a man may as well read the Scriptures as ſtudy a portion of *Ariſtotle*, or of natural philoſophy or mathematics. He that can obſerve any thing comely or commendable, and unworthy and baſe, in another man, may alſo reflect upon himſelf, and ſee how *face anſwers to face*, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, Proverbs xxvii. 19. If men would ſeriouſly commun with their hearts, their own conſciences would tell them plainly, That they might avoid more evil than they do, and that they might do more good than they do; and that they do not put forth that power which God hath given them, nor faithfully uſe thoſe talents, nor improve the advantages and means afforded them.

I fear the ground of moſt men's miſery will prove to be a ſecond fall; as God will not allow, in reſpect of temporal miſery, that proverb, *The fathers have eaten ſour grapes, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge*, Ezek. xviii. 2. much leſs will he allow it, in reſpect of eternal. It will not be ſo much becauſe our firſt parents incurred God's diſpleaſure, as becauſe we have neglected

* τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

neglected what might have been done by us afterwards, in order to the seeking of God, his face and favour, while he might be found.

Up then and be doing, and the Lord will be with us. He will not leave us nor forsake us, if we seriously set ourselves about the work. Let us endeavour to acquaint ourselves with our own lives, and the true rules of life, with this which *Solomon* here calls *the way of life:* let us inform our minds, as much as may be, in the excellency and loveliness of practical religion; that, beholding it in its own beauty and amiableness, we may the more sincerely embrace it. As there would need nothing else to deter and affright men from sin but its own ugliness and deformity, were it presented to a naked view, and seen as it is: so nothing would more effectually commend religion to the minds of men, than the displaying and unfolding the excellencies of its nature, than the true native beauty and inward lustre of religion itself; neither the evening nor the morning-star could so sensibly commend themselves to our bodily eyes, and delight them with their shining beauties *, as true religion, which is an undefiled beam of the uncreated light, would to a mind capable of conversing with it. Religion, which is the true wisdom, is, (as the author of the book of wisdom speaks of wisdom,) *A pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirrour of the power of God, and the image of his goodness: she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it,* Wisd. vii. 25, *&c.*

Religion is no such austere, and rigid thing, as to affright men away from it: No, but they who are acquainted with the power of it, find it to be altogether sweet and amiable. An holy soul sees so much of the glory of religion in the lively impressions which it bears upon itself, as both wooes and wins it. We may truly say concerning religion to such souls, as St. *Paul* spake to the *Corinthians*, *Needs it any epistles of commendation to you?* Needs it any thing to court your affections?



* ὅθ' ἕσπερος, οὔθ' ἑῶος οὕτω θαυμαστός.

*Ye are indeed its epiſtle, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God,* 2 Corinth. iii. 2, 3.

Religion is not like the Prophet's roll, ſweet as honey, when it was in his mouth, but as bitter as gall in his belly. Religion is no ſullen ſtoiciſm, no ſour phariſaiſm: it does not conſiſt in a few melancholy paſſions, in ſome dejected looks or depreſſions of mind: but it conſiſts in freedom, love, peace, life, and power; the more it comes to be digeſted into our lives, the more ſweet and lovely we ſhall find it to be. Thoſe ſpots and wrinkles which corrupt minds think they ſee in the face of religion, are indeed no where elſe but in their own deformed and miſhapen apprehenſions. It is no wonder when a defiled fancy comes to be the glaſs, if you have an unlovely reflection. Let us therefore labour to purify our own ſouls from all worldly pollutions, let us breath after the aid and aſſiſtance of the Divine Spirit, that it may irradiate and enlighten our minds, that we may be able to ſee divine things in a divine light: let us endeavour to live more in a real practice of thoſe rules of religious and holy living commended to us by our ever bleſſed Lord and Saviour: ſo ſhall we know religion better, and knowing it, love it, and loving it, be ſtill more and more ambitiouſly purſuing after it, till we come to a full attainment of it, and therein, of our own perfection and everlaſting bliſs.

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# CONFLICTS and CONQUESTS

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# CHRISTIAN,

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Repreſented in a Diſcourſe upon *James* iv. 7.

*Reſiſt the Devil, and he will fly from you.*

## CHAP. I.

IT hath been an antient tradition received by the Gentile philoſophers, that there are two main principles which ſpread their influence thro' the whole univerſe: the one they called *The principle of good*, the other they called *The principle of evil:* and they held that theſe two maintain a continual conteſt and enmity. *The principle of goodneſs*, which is nothing elſe but God himſelf, who diſplays himſelf in clear and lovely ſtamps and impreſſions of beauty and goodneſs thro' the whole creation, endeavours ſtill to aſſimilate and unite it to himſelf. And, on the other ſide, *The principle of evil*, the prince of darkneſs, having once ſtained the original beauty and glory of the divine workmanſhip, is continually ſtriving to mould and ſhape it more and more into his own likeneſs. And, as there is ſuch a perpe-

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tual and active enmity between God and the evil ſpirit; ſo whatſoever is from God is perpetually oppoſing and warring againſt that which ariſes from the devil. The divine goodneſs hath put enmity between whatſoever is born of him, and the ſeed of the ſerpent. As at the beginning he divided between the night and the day, between light and darkneſs, ſo that they can never intermingle or comply one with another, or be reconciled one to the other: ſo neither can thoſe beams of divine light and love which deſcend from God upon the ſouls of men be ever reconciled to thoſe foul and filthy miſts of ſin and darkneſs which aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit of hell and death. That ſpirit is not from God, *who is the Father of lights, and in whom there is no darkneſs*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, which endeavours to compound with hell, and to accommodate between God and the devil. God himſelf hath ſet the bounds to darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. Divine truth and goodneſs cannot contract themſelves with any thing that is from hell, or eſpouſe themſelves to any child of darkneſs: as it was ſet forth in the emblem under the Old Law, where none of the holy ſeed might marry with the people of any ſtrange God. Though that rule, *touch not, taſte not, handle not*, be aboliſhed in the ſymbolical rites, yet it hath an immutable myſtery in it, not ſubject to the laws or changes of time.

He that will entertain any correſpondence with the devil, or receive upon his ſoul his image or the number of his name, muſt firſt diveſt himſelf of all that which hath any alliance to God or true goodneſs within him: he muſt transform his mind into the true ſimilitude of thoſe foul fiends of darkneſs, and abandon all relation to the ſupreme good. And yet though ſome men endeavour to do this, and to efface all thoſe impreſſions of light and reaſon, and deſtroy all that which is from God within them, that ſo they may reconcile themſelves to ſin and hell; yet can they never make any juſt peace with them: *There is no peace to the wicked, but they are like the troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* Iſaiah lvii. 20. Thoſe evil ſpirits are always turbulent and reſtleſs: and though

though they maintain continually a war with God and his kingdom, yet are they always exciting diſturbances in their own kingdom; and the more they conteſt with God and are deprived of him, the more full are they of horror and tumultuous commotions within. Nothing can ſtand firm and ſure, nothing can have any true and quiet eſtabliſhment, that hath not the everlaſting arms of true goodneſs under it to ſupport it. And as they who deliver over themſelves moſt to the devil's pleaſure, and devote themſelves to his ſervice, cannot do it without a ſecret inward antipathy againſt him or dreadful thoughts of him: ſo neither can thoſe impure ſpirits ſtand before the divine glory; but being filled with trembling and horror continually endeavour to hide themſelves from it, and fly away before it as the darkneſs flies away before the light. And according as God hath in any places in any ages of the world made any manifeſtations of himſelf to men ſo have thoſe evil ſpirits been vanquiſhed, and forced to quit their former territories *.

Our Saviour hath found by good experience, how weak a thing the Devil's kingdom is, when he *ſpoiled all the principalities and powers of darkneſs, and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in* (or, *by*) *it*, that is, his croſs, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks: Coloſ. ii. 15. and if we will reſolutely follow *the Captain of our ſalvation*, and fight under his banner, *as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*, we have full ſecurity given us for the ſame ſucceſs, *reſiſt the devil, and he will fly from you.*

CHAP.

* As is eſpecially very obſervable in the ceaſing of all the *Grecian* oracles ſoon after the goſpel was promulged in thoſe parts, when thoſe deſolate ſpirits with horrid and diſmal groans reſigned up their habitations, as *Plutarch* hath recorded of them.

## CHAP. II.

IN theſe words *reſiſt the devil, and he will fly from you*, we ſhall take notice firſt of what is evidently implied, *viz. That the devil is continually buſy with us.* This may be conſidered under a double notion.

1. By *the devil*, we are to underſtand that apoſtate ſpirit which fell from God, and is always deſigning to draw down others from God alſo. The old Dragon (mentioned in the revelation) with his tail drew down the third part of the ſtars of heaven and caſt them to the earth. As true goodneſs is not content to be happy alone; ſo neither can ſin and wickedneſs be content to be miſerable alone. The evil ſpirit told God himſelf what his employment was, *viz. To go to and fro in the earth, and to walk up and down in it:* Job. i. 7. he is always walking up and down through dry places (where no divine influences fall to water it) as our Saviour ſpeaks, *ſeeking reſt*, Matth. xii. 43. though always reſtleſs. The philoſophy of the antients hath obſerved that every man that comes into this world hath a good and an evil genius attending upon him. It were perhaps a vain curioſity to inquire whether the number of evil ſpirits exceed the number of men: but this is too too certain, that we never want the ſecret and latent attendance of them. The devil is not only a word or a name made to affright and ſcare timorous men with; neither are we then only in danger of him, when he preſents himſelf to us in ſome corporeal form: it is nothing elſe but a ſuperſtitious weakneſs to be afraid of him only then when he appears embodied, and to neglect that unſeen and inſenſible influence which has continual converſe with us, as an unbodied ſpirit may have upon us. Thoſe evil ſpirits are not yet caſt out of the world into outer darkneſs, though it be prepared for them: the bottomleſs pit hath not yet ſhut its mouth upon them. They fell from God not ſo much

much by a local deſcent, as by a mental apoſtaſy and diſſimilitude to God: and they are now priſoners at large, having all this habitable world for their rendezvous, and are ſtiled by the Apoſtle *ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places.* Epheſ. vi. 12. Whereſoever there are any in a diſpoſition to ſin againſt God, whereſoever there are any capable of a temptation or diabolical impreſſion, here and there are they. A man needs not dig into the chambers of death, or ſearch among the ſhadows of darkneſs to find them; he needs not go down into hell to ſeek them, or uſe any magical charms to raiſe them up from thence: no, thoſe wicked and impure ſpirits are always wandring up and down amongſt us, ſeeking whom they may devour. As there is a good ſpirit converſant in the world, inviting and alluring men to virtue and goodneſs; ſo there is an evil ſpirit, perpetually tempting and inticing men to ſin and vice. Uncloathed and unbodied natures may converſe with us by ſecret illapſes, while we are not aware of them. I doubt not but there are many more divine impreſſions made upon the minds of men, both good and bad, from the good ſpirit of God, than are ordinarly obſerved; there are many ſoft and ſilent impulſes, gentle motions, ſoliciting and exciting men to religion and holineſs; of which they many times take little notice.

There are ſuch ſecret meſſages often brought from heaven to the ſouls of men by an unknown and unſeen hand, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks; *once, yea twice have I heard it, that power belongeth unto God.* Pſalm. lxii. 11. And as there are ſuch divine irradiations ſliding into the ſouls of men from God; ſo there are, no queſtion, many and frequent ſuggeſtions to the fancies and imaginations of men ariſing from the *evil ſpirit*; and a watchful obſerver of his own heart and life ſhall often hear the voice of wiſdom and the voice of folly ſpeaking to him: he that hath his eyes opened, may ſee both the viſions of God falling upon him, and diſcern the falſe and fooliſh fires of Satan that would draw away his mind from God. This is our unhappineſs, that the devil is ſo near us and we ſee him not; he is converſant with

us, and yet we are not aware of him. Thoſe are the moſt deſperate deſigns and likelieſt to take effect, that are carried on by an unſeen and unappearing enemy: and if we will provide ourſelves againſt the devil, who never miſſeth any opportunity that lies in his way to tempt us, nor is ever failing in any plot, we muſt then have our ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil; we muſt get our minds awakened with clear and evident principles of light; we muſt get our judgments and conſciences well informed with ſober and practical truth, ſuch as tends to make us moſt like to God, and to reconcile our natures more perfectly to divine goodneſs. Then ſhall we know and diſcover that apoſtate ſpirit in all his ſtratagems whereby he ſeeks to bereave us of our happineſs: we ſhall know him as well when he cloaths himſelf like an angel of light, as when he appears in his own nakedneſs and deformity. It is obſerved by ſome, that God never ſuffered the devil to aſſume any human ſhape, but with ſome character whereby his body might be diſtinguiſhed from the true body of a man: and ſurely the devil cannot ſo exactly counterfeit an angel of light, but that by a diſcerning mind he may be diſtinguiſhed from him. A bare imitation will always fall ſhortof the copy from whence it is taken; and though ſin and error may take up the mantle of truth and cloath themſelves with it, yet he that is inwardly acquainted with truth and an ingenuous lover and purſuer of it, will be able to find out the impoſture, he will be able to ſee through the vail into the naked deformity of them.

## CHAP. III.

WHEN we ſay, *The devil is continually buſy with us*, I mean not only ſome apoſtate ſpirit as one particular being, but that ſpirit of apoſtacy which is lodged in all men's natures; and this may ſeem particularly

cularly to be aimed at in this place, if we obſerve the context: as the ſcripture ſpeaks of Chriſt not only as a particular perſon, but as a divine principle in holy ſouls.

Indeed the devil is not only the name of one particular thing, but a nature: he is not ſo much one particular being, deſigned to torment wicked men in the world to come, as a helliſh and diabolical nature ſeated in the minds of men. He is not only one apoſtate ſpirit fallen down from heaven and bleſſedneſs; but alſo a ſpirit of apoſtacy, a degenerate and depraved nature. Could the devil change his foul and impure nature, he would neither be a devil nor miſerable: and ſo long as any man carries about him a ſinful and corrupt nature, he can neither be in perfect favour with God, nor bleſſed. Wickedneſs is the form and eſſence of all the wicked ſpirits: it is the difference of a name rather than any proper difference of natures that is between the devil and wicked men. Whereſoever we ſee malice, revenge, pride, envy, hatred, ſelf-will and ſelf-love, we may ſay, here and there is that evil ſpirit. This indeed is that venom of the ſerpent, the poiſon and ſting too of that diabolical nature. As the kingdom of heaven is not ſo much without men as within, as our Saviour tells us, ſo the tyranny of the devil and hell is not ſo much in ſome external things, as in the qualities and diſpoſitions of men's minds. And as the enjoying of God and converſing with him conſiſts not ſo much in a change of place, as in the participation of the divine nature, and in our aſſimilation unto God: ſo our converſing with the devil is not ſo much by a mutual local preſence, as by an imitation of a wicked and ſinful nature derived upon mens own ſouls. Therefore the Jews were wont to ſtile that original pravity that is lodged in men's ſpirits, *the angel of death* * and fiend of darkneſs. Thoſe filthy luſts and corruptions which men foment and entertain in their minds, are the noiſom vapours that aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit; they are the thick miſts and fogs of helliſh darkneſs ariſing in their ſouls, as an introduction of hell and



* מלאך המות.

death within. Where we find uncleanneſs, intemperance, covetouſneſs, or any ſuch impure or unhallowed behaviour, we may ſay, Here Satan's throne is.

This ſinful and corrupt nature being the true iſſue of hell itſelf, is continually dragging down men's ſouls thither. All ſin and wickedneſs in man's ſpirit hath the central force and energy of hell in it, and is perpetually preſſing down towards it as towards its own place. There needs no fatal neceſſity or aſtral impulſes to tumble wicked men down forcibly into hell: no, for ſin itſelf, haſtned by the mighty weight of its own nature, carries them down thither with the moſt ſwift and headlong motion. As they ſay of true holineſs and chriſtianity, Chriſt's burden, which is nothing elſe but true godlineſs, is a winged thing, and bravely bears itſelf upwards upon its own wings ſoaring aloft towards God: ſo we may ſay of all impiety, the devil's burden is winged; the deviliſh nature is always within the central attractions of hell, and its own weight inſtigates and accelerates its motion thither. He that indulges himſelf in the ſociety of any ſin, does in reality entertain a familiar dæmon. Sin is nothing better than the baſe offſpring of darkneſs and deformity; it hath no other extraction or pedigree than may be derived from thoſe unclean ſpirits that are neſtled in hell. All men in reality converſe either with God or with the devil, and walk in the confines either of heaven or of hell: they have their fellowſhip either with the Father and the ſon, as St. *John* ſpeaks; 1 John i. 3. or elſe with the Apoſtate and evil angels.

I know theſe expreſſions will ſeem to ſome very harſh and unwelcome: but I would beſeech them to conſider what they will call that ſpirit of malice and envy, that ſpirit of pride, ambition, vain-glory, covetouſneſs, injuſtice, uncleanneſs, *&c.* that commonly reigns ſo much, and acts ſo violently in the minds and lives of men. Let us ſpeak the truth, and call things by their own names; let us not flatter ourſelves, or paint our filthy ſores: ſo much as there is of ſin in any man, ſo much there is of the old man, ſo much there is

of

of the diabolical nature. Why do we defy the devil ſo much with our tongues, while we entertain him in our hearts? But indeed men do but quarrel with him in the name and notion of him, while yet their hearts can readily comply with all that which the devil is*. As men's love to God is ordinarly nothing elſe but the mere tendency of their natures to ſomething that hath the notion or name of God put upon it, without any clear or diſtinct apprehenſions of him; ſo their hatred of the devil is commonly nothing elſe but an inward diſplicency of nature againſt ſomething entitled by the devil's name. Or elſe at beſt, corrupt minds do nothing elſe but faſhion out a God and a devil, a heaven and a hell, to themſelves, by the power of their own fancies: and ſo they are to them nothing elſe but their own creatures, ſuſtained and ſupported by the force of their own imaginations which firſt raiſed them. And as they commonly make a God like to themſelves, ſuch a one as they can beſt comply with and love; ſo they make a devil moſt unlike to themſelves, which may be any thing but what they themſelves are, that ſo they may moſt freely ſpend their anger and hatred upon him: juſt as they ſay of ſome of the *Ethiopians*, who uſe to paint the devil white, becauſe they themſelves are black. This is a ſtrange fantaſtic kind of madneſs, whereby men ſportingly bereave themſelves of the ſupreme good, and inſure themſelves as much as may be to hell and miſery: they may thus cheat themſelves for a while, but the eternal foundation of the divine Being is immutable and unchangeable. God is but *one, and his name one*, as the prophet ſpeaks, Zech. xiv. 9. (howſoever the ſeveral fancies of men may ſhape him out diverſly;) and where we find wiſdom, juſtice, lovelineſs, goodneſs, love and glory, in their higheſt elevations



* That antipathy which is ordinarly expreſſed againſt him, like thoſe natural antipathies which the philoſophers ſpeak of, being nothing elſe but occult qualities, or natural inſtincts, which as they ariſe not from any principle of reaſon or underſtanding, ſo neither are they guided or governed by it.

tions and moſt unbounded dimenſions, that is he: and where we find any true participations of theſe, there is a true communication of God; and a defection from theſe is the eſſence of ſin and the foundation of hell.

Now if this be rightly conſidered, I hope there will an argument ſtrong enough appear from the thing itſelf, to enforce the exhortation of St. *James*, *reſiſt the devil*: endeavour to mortify and crucify the old man with all the corrupt luſts and affections of the fleſh.

We never ſo truly hate ſin, as when we hate it for its own uglineſs and deformity: as we never love God ſo truly, as when we love him for his own beauty and excellency. If we calculate aright, as we ſhall find nothing better than God himſelf, for which we ſhould love him; ſo neither ſhall we find any thing worſe than ſin itſelf, for which we ſhould hate it. Our aſſimilation to God and conformity to him, inſtates us in a firm poſſeſſion of true happineſs, which is nothing elſe but God himſelf, who is all being and bleſſedneſs; and our diſſimilitude to God and apoſtacy from him, involves us in our own miſery, and ſets us at the greateſt enmity with what our unſatiable deſires moſt ardently crave, which is the enjoyment of true and ſatisfying good. Sins are thoſe fiery ſnakes which will eternally laſh and torment all damned ſpirits. Every man's hell ariſes from the bottom of his own ſoul; as thoſe noiſom miſts and tempeſtuous exhalations that infeſt the earth, have their firſt original from the earth itſelf. Thoſe ſtreams of fire and brimſtone ordained for the torment of all damned ſpirits, proceed rather from their own filthy and corrupt nature than from any external thing. Hell is not ſo much induced, as educed out of men's filthy luſts and paſſions. I will not here diſpute what external appendixes there may be of heaven or hell; but methinks I no where find a more lively deſcription of the true properties and operations of them, though under other names, than in thoſe characters of the fleſh and ſpirit, in Gal. v. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Eternal death is begotten and brought forth out of the womb of luſt, and is little elſe but ſin conſummated and in its full growth, as St. *James* intimates, chap. i. 15.

Would

Would wicked men dwell a little more at home, and deſcend into the bottom of their own hearts, they ſhould ſoon find hell opening her mouth wide upon them, and thoſe ſecret fires of inward fury and diſpleaſure breaking out upon them, which might fully inform them of the eſtate of true miſery, as being a ſhort anticipation of it. But in this life wicked men for the moſt part elude their own miſery for a time, and ſeek to avoid the dreadful ſentence of their own conſciences, by flying from themſelves into a converſe with other things *, elſe they would ſoon find their own home too hot for them. But while men's minds are perpetually rambling all the world over in a purſuit of worldly deſigns, they are unacquainted with the affairs of their own ſouls; and know not how deeply a ſelf-converſe and reflection upon their own prodigious deformities would pierce their ſouls with anguiſh; how vaſtly would they ſwell with fury, rage, horror, conſternation and whatſoever is contrary to that ineffable light and love and peace which is in heaven, in natures fully reconciled and united to true goodneſs? As true goodneſs cannot borrow beauty from any external thing to recommend itſelf to the minds and affections of good men, ſeeing itſelf is the very idea and true life of all beauty and perfection, the ſource of bliſs and peace to all that partake of her: ſo neither can ſin and wickedneſs to an enlightned ſoul appear more deformed, loathſome and hateful, in any other ſhape than its own.

## CHAP IV.

FRom theſe words, *reſiſt the devil*, we may take notice of the warfare of a Chriſtian life, of that active life and valour which good men expreſs in this world.

* *Ut nemo in ſeſe tentat deſcendere.*

world. A true chriſtian ſpirit is maſculine and generous; it is no ſuch poor, ſluggiſh, puſillanimous thing as ſome men fancy it to be, but active and noble. We wreſtle not, ſaith the Apoſtle, *againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places*. Epheſ. vi. 12. True religion does not conſiſt in a mere paſſive capacity, in a ſluggiſh kind of doing nothing, that ſo God himſelf might do all; but it conſiſts in life and power within: therefore it is called by the Apoſtle, *the ſpirit of power, of love, and of a ſound mind*; 2 Tim. i. 9. It is called *the law of the ſpirit of life*, ſtrongly enabling good men againſt *the law of ſin and death*. Rom, viii. 2. True wiſdom, as the wiſe man hath well ſtiled it, is *the unſpotted mirror of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; neither can any defiled thing enter into it*: Wiſdom. vii. 26. it goes in and out in the ſtrength of God himſelf; and *as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly*. 1 Cor. xv. 48. Every thing as it partakes more of God, and comes nearer to him, ſo it becomes more active and lively, as making the nearer approaches to the fountain of life and virtue. A good man doth not only then move, when there is ſome powerful impreſſion and impulſe upon him; but he hath a ſpring of perpetual motion within. When God reſtores men to a new and divine life, he doth not make them like ſo many dead inſtruments, ſtringing and fitting them, which yet are able to yield no ſound of themſelves; but he puts a living harmony within them. That is but a mechanical religion which moves no longer than ſome external weights and impulſes are upon it, whether thoſe be (I think I may ſafely ſay) from ſome worldly thing or from God himſelf, while he acts upon men from without them, and not from within them. It is not a melancholy kind of ſitting ſtill, and ſlothful waiting, that ſpeaks men enlivened by the ſpirit and power of God. It is not religion to ſtifle and ſmother thoſe active powers and principles which are within us, or to dry up the fountain of inward life and virtue. How ſay ſome amongſt us, that there

there is no reſurrection from the dead? no ſpirit or life within; but all our motions in religion are merely from ſome aſſiſting form without? good men do not walk up and down the world merely like ghoſts and ſhadows, or like dead bodies aſſumed by ſome ſpirit, which are taken up and laid down again by him at his pleaſure: but they are indeed living men, by a real participation from him who is indeed a quickning ſpirit. Were our religion ſo much a thing without us as ſome men would ſeem to fancy it, were we ſo dead and lifeleſs as that we would never move but from an external impulſe; as our religion could never indeed be called ours, ſo neither could we ever have the inward ſenſe of that bliſs and peace which goes along with it; but muſt be like ſo many heavy loggs or dull pieces of earth in heaven and happineſs. That is a very earthly ſpirit in religion which ſinks like the lees to the bottom; or rather it is like that *terra damnata* of which the chymiſts ſpeak, having no vigour, life or activity left in it, is truly dead to God, and is reprobate to any thing of heaven. We know the pedigree of thoſe exhalations that ariſe no higher than a mere external force from the ſun's heat weigheth them up, to be but baſe and earthly; and therefore, having no natural energy within themſelves imparted to them, they ſink down again to the earth from whence they came. The ſpirit which is from heaven is always, out of an inbred nobleneſs which bears it up, carried upwards again towards heaven from whence it came, powerfully reſiſting all things that would deprive it of God or hinder it from returning to its original: it is always moving upwards in an even and ſteady way towards God from whence it came, leaving the dark regions of hell and death under it: it reſiſts hell and darkneſs by aſſimilating and conforming itſelf to God; it reſiſts darkneſs in the armour of light; it reſiſts death and deſtruction by the power of divine love. It muſt be ſomething of heaven in the minds of men, which muſt reſiſt the devil and hell.

We do not always reſiſt the devil then when we bid defiance to him, or when we declaim moſt zealouſly againſt

againſt him; neither does our reſiſting and oppoſing of ſin and wickedneſs conſiſt in the violence of ſome feminine paſſions which may ſometimes be raiſed by the power of fancy in the minds of men againſt it: but it conſiſts rather in a mature and ſedate reſolution againſt it in our own ſouls, ariſing from a clear judgment of the ſoul and hateful nature of ſin itſelf, and of him who is the patron of it; in a conſtant and ſerious endeavour of ſettling the government of our own ſouls, and eſtabliſhing the principality of grace and peace within ourſelves. There is a pompous and popular kind of tumult in the world, which ſometimes goes for zeal to God and his kingdom againſt the devil; when as men's own pride and paſſions diſguiſe themſelves under the notions of a religious fervency. Some men think themſelves the greateſt champions for God and his cauſe, when they can take the greateſt liberty to quarrel with every thing abroad, and without themſelves, which is not ſhaped according to the mould of their own opinions, their own ſelf-will, humour and intereſt: whereas indeed this ſpiritual warfare is not ſo much maintained againſt a foreign enemy, as againſt thoſe domeſtic rebellions that are within: neither is it then carried on moſt ſucceſsfully, when men make the greateſt noiſe. That impetuous violence and tempeſtuouſneſs with which men are acted in pretenſions of religion ariſes ordinarly, I doubt, from unquiet and diſturbed minds within: whereas it is indeed the inward conflicts and commotions, ſin and vice, and not a holy zeal for God, which diſcompoſe the minds of men. Sin, where it is entertained, will indeed breed diſturbance, and break the peace of a man's own ſpirit; but a true reſiſting and oppoſing of it is the reſtoring of the ſoul to its juſt conſiſtency, freedom and ſerenity again. As God's kingdom is ſet up, ſo the devil's kingdom may be pulled down, without the noiſe of axes and hammers. We may then attain to the greateſt atchievements againſt the gates of hell and death, when we moſt of all poſſeſs our own ſouls in patience, and collect our minds into the moſt peaceful, compoſed and united temper. The

motions

motions of true practical religion are moſt like that of the heavens, which, tho' moſt ſwift, is yet moſt ſilent. As grace and true religion is no lazy or ſluggiſh thing, but in perpetual motion; ſo all the motions of it are ſoft and gentle: while it acts moſt powerfully within, it alſo acts moſt peacefully. The kingdom of heaven comes not with obſervation, that men may ſay, *Lo here*, or *Lo there*, Luke xvii. 20.; it is not with the devouring fire coming after it, or a whirlwind going before it. This fight and conteſt with ſin and Satan is not to be known by the rattling of the chariots, or the ſound of an alarm: it is indeed alone tranſacted upon the inner ſtage of men's ſouls and ſpirits; and is rather a pacifying and quieting of all thoſe tumults raiſed there by ſin and Satan; it is rather a reconciling the minds of men to truth, juſtice, and holineſs; it is a captivating and ſubjecting all our powers and faculties to God and true goodneſs, thro' the effectual working of a divine love and humility: and this reſiſtance is always attended with victory, and triumph waits upon this fight; which is the third and laſt obſervation we ſhall make upon theſe words.

## CHAP. V.

THE certainty of ſucceſs to all thoſe that reſiſt the devil; *reſiſt the devil, and he will fly from you.* He cannot ſtand, when oppoſed in the ſtrength of God, he will fall down as ſwift as lightning; he cannot bear the glory of God ſhining in the ſouls of men. Here it is no more but ſtand, and conquer, reſiſt, and vanquiſh.

For, *Firſt* of all, The devil and ſin, in themſelves conſidered, are but weak and impotent; they cannot prevail over that ſoul which yields not to them: the evil ſpirit then only prevails over us, when we ourſelves conſent to his ſuggeſtions; all his ſtrength lies in our treachery

treachery and falſeneſs to our own ſouls, Tho' thoſe wicked ſpirits be perpetually ſo near us, yet they cannot bow or bend our wills: there is a place of defence in the ſouls of men into which they cannot enter: they may ſtand at a diſtance, allure and entice them; but they cannot prevail over them, except they wilfully and ſhamefully deliver over their ſtrength into the enemy's hand. It is indeed nothing elſe but hell itſelf in the ſouls of men that gives the devil ſuch free entertainment there: the wills of men, ſtamped with a diabolical form, and bearing the devil's image and inſcription upon them, declare his right over them. Men are therefore ſo much captivated by him, becauſe they voluntarily take his yoke upon them. Would we reſiſt ſin and Satan, they could not hurt us. Every thing is weak and impotent, according to the diſtance it ſtands from God, who is the only fountain of life and power: and therefore it was well reſolved by the philoſopher, *Sin in itſelf is a weak and impotent thing, and proceeds from weakneſs* *; it conſiſts not properly in any native power and ſtrength which it hath within itſelf, but in an impotency and privation of all true being and perfection; and therefore, whereſoever any thing of God appears, it will deſtroy it. He that is born of God ſhall overcome the world, the devil and ſin, for *the ſeed of God remaineth in him*, 1 John iii. 9.

Let us endeavour to get our minds enlightned with divine truth, clear and practical truth, let us earneſtly endeavour after a true participation of the divine nature; and then ſhall we find hell and death to fly away before us. Let us not impute the fruits of our own ſluggiſhneſs to the power of the evil ſpirit without, or to God's neglecting of us: ſay not, Who ſhall ſtand againſt thoſe mighty giants? No; arm thyſelf with the mind of Chriſt, a fixt reſolution to ſerve the will and pleaſure of the Almighty; and then fear not what ſin and hell can do againſt thee. Open thy windows, thou ſluggard, and let in the beams of divine light, that are there waiting upon thee, till thou awake out of thy ſlothfulneſs;

* πᾶσα κακία διὰ ἀδυναμίας συμβαίνει.

ſlothfulneſs; then ſhalt thou find the ſhadows of the night diſpelled and ſcattered, and the warm beams of light and love enfolding of thee, which, the higher they ariſe upon the horizon of thy ſoul, the more fully they will diſplay their native ſtrength and beauty upon thee, transforming thee more and more from darkneſs to light, from the ſimilitude of Satan into a participation of the divine image. The devil is not to be kept off from us by ſetting any ſpell about us, or driven away from us by any magical charms. We need not go and beat the air to drive away thoſe evil ſpirits from about us: but let us turn within ourſelves, and beat down that pride and paſſion, thoſe holds of Satan there, which are therefore ſtrong, becauſe we oppoſe them weakly. Sin is nothing elſe but a degeneration from true goodneſs, conceived by a dark and cloudy underſtanding, and brought forth by a corrupt will; it hath no conſiſtency in itſelf, or foundation of its own to ſupport it. What the *Jews* have obſerved of error, is true of all ſin, it hath no feet *, no baſis of its own to ſubſiſt and reſt itſelf upon. Let us withdraw our will and affections from it, and it will ſoon fall into nothing. It was the fond error of the *Manichæans*, That there was ſome actual principle of evil, which having an eternal exiſtence of its own, had alſo a mighty and uncontroulable power from within itſelf, whereby it could forcibly enter and penetrate into the ſouls of men; and, ſeating itſelf there, by ſome hidden influences, irreſiſtably incline and inforce them to evil: which error I wiſh were as well confuted by the lives and practices of men, as it hath been by the writings both of fathers and philoſophers. But it is too apparent, that men maintain that lye by a compliance with the diabolical powers: we ourſelves uphold that kingdom of darkneſs, which elſe would tumble down and ſlide into that nothing from whence it came. All truth and goodneſs are of an eternal nature, they are one and unchangeable, ſubſiſting upon the ſtrength of omnipotency: but all ſin and vice is our own creature; we only give life to them



* שרק אין לו רגלים

which indeed are our death, and would ſoon wither and fade away did we withdraw our concurrence from them.

*Secondly*, We have a further ground for our expectation of victory in all conteſts with ſin and Satan, from the powerful aſſiſtance of God himſelf, who is never wanting to thoſe who ſeek after him, and never fails thoſe who engage in his quarrels. While we ſtrive againſt ſin, we may ſafely expect that the Divinity itſelf will ſtrive with us, and impart that ſtrength and power to us which ſhall at laſt make us more than conquerors. God hath not forſaken the earth: but, as his Almighty eſſence pervades all things, ſuſtaining and upholding the frame of the whole univerſe; ſo, more eſpecially does it bear up in its almighty arms thoſe things that are more nearly related to himſelf, always cheriſhing them with his own goodneſs. Whereſoever God beholds any breathings after himſelf, he gives life to them, as thoſe which are his own breath in them. As he who projects wickedneſs, ſhall be ſure to find Satan ſtanding at his right hand ready to aſſiſt him in it: ſo he who purſues after God and holineſs, ſhall find God nearer to him than he is to himſelf, in the free and liberal communications of himſelf to him. He that goes out in God's battels, fighting under our Saviour's banner, may look upwards, and, opening his eyes, may ſee the mountains full of horſes and chariots of fire round about him. God does not delight in the death and deſtruction of men, nor, when he ſees them ſtruggling and contending for life, will he deny them his aſſiſtance. No, but with the moſt tender and fatherly compaſſions his bowels yearn over them; and his Almighty arm is ſtretched forth for them; and in his ſtrength they ſhall prevail: they ſhall be born up, as upon eagles wings; they ſhall walk in the might of his ſtrength, who is able to ſave, and not faint. Where there is any ſerious and ſober reſolution againſt ſin, any real motion towards God, there is the bleſſing of heaven in it; he that planted it, will alſo water it, and make it to bud and bloſſom, and bring forth fruit.

Wherefore, to ſhut up this diſcourſe, by way of application,

plication, let us make uſe of this as a further argument to inforce the Apoſtle's exhortation upon ourſelves, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks of his enemies, ſo let us ſay of our ſpiritual enemies, *They compaſs me about, they compaſs me in on every ſide; but, in the name of the Lord, I will deſtroy them*, Pſalm cxviii. 10. Let us ſet ourſelves with all our might to mortify the old man, and to crucify all the affections of the fleſh: *Let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which ſo eaſily beſets us, and run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith, who is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 1, 2. as a great and mighty conqueror who will declare the perfection of his own power in our weakneſs, if we lay hold of his ſtrength. Tho' we are not able to change our own natures, or to riſe above the ſource of our animal and ſelfiſh beings, by our own power; yet let us endeavour to ſubdue all thoſe external vices of luxury and wantonneſs, of injuſtice and revenge: let us break the bands of pride, malice, vain-glory, and whatſoever elſe hold us in captivity to hell, and with confidence apply ourſelves to him who is an Almighty Saviour; and, when he joins his Almighty ſtrength with us, we need not fear any thing: *He ſhall tread down Satan under our feet*, and we ſhall one day *tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon ſhall we trample under our feet*, Pſalm xci. 13. we ſhall break the ſerpent's head, tho' he may bruiſe our heel. Tho' God may ſuffer him ſo far to ſerve his own rage and the helliſh malice of ſuch as are in league with him, as to pull down with violence our earthly tabernacles; yet, while we ſo ſuffer by him, we are conquerors over him.

I ſhould now conclude all, and leave you with this general application, but that the preſent occaſion * hath drawn it down for me to a particular caſe. Did we not live in a world of profeſſed wickedneſs, wherein ſo many

* This diſcourſe was delivered at *Huntington*, where a yearly ſermon is preached by a member of Queen's College, *Cambridge*, againſt witchcraft, diabolical contracts, *&c.*

ny men's ſins go in open view before them to judgment, it might be thought needleſs to perſuade men to reſiſt the devil, when he appears in his own colours, to make merchandiſe of them, and comes in a formal way to bargain with them for their ſouls; that which human nature (however enthralled to ſin and Satan in a more myſterious way,) abhors, and none admit but thoſe who are quite degenerated from human kind. That which I ſhall further add, ſhall be by way of caution only to ſuggeſt two things, which are the forerunners to ſuch diabolical contracts, and put temptations into the hands of the tempter.

*Firſt*, Thoſe heliiſh paſſions of malice, envy, and revenge, which are the black form and image of the devil himſelf; theſe, when they are once ripened, fit men for the moſt formal converſe with the devil that may be: that nature cannot eaſily abhor him, which is ſo perfectly conformed to him.

*Secondly*, The uſe of any arts, rites, or ceremonies not underſtood, of which we can give no rational or divine account; this indeed is nothing elſe but a kind of magic which the devil himſelf owns, and to which he gives life, tho' he may not be corporeally preſent, or require inſtantly any further covenant from the uſers of them. The devil no queſtion is preſent to all his own rites and ceremonies, tho' men diſcern him not; and may, upon the uſe of them, ſecretly produce thoſe effects which may gain credit to them. Among theſe rites we may reckon inſignificant forms of words, with their ſeveral modes and manner of pronunciation, aſtrological arts, and whatſoever elſe pretends to any ſtrange effects, which we cannot with good reaſon either aſcribe to God or nature. As God will only be converſed withal in a way of light and underſtanding; ſo the devil loves to be converſed with in a way of darkneſs and obſcurity.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM